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Tuning In: Key Audience Issues for Public Service Broadcaster, RTE Radio 1 (1995-2012)

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To The
Dublin Institute of Technology

March 2012.

**Tuning in: Key audience issues for public service
broadcaster, RTE Radio 1 (1995 -2012).**

By

Patrick Hannon

B.Sc. (Hons)

Thesis submitted for the award of

**M.Phil.
(Master of Philosophy)**

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School of Media, College of Arts and Tourism
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January 2013

Abstract

This thesis explores listener loyalty to public radio in Ireland where radio listenership is one of the highest in Europe. Critical to this study is exploring the notion and understanding – *from the listeners' perspective* – of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), in particular, the complexities of the concept as it is understood and operated by RTE Radio 1. A qualitative inquiry with twenty-three participants representing the audience and RTE management was carried out. Underpinned with an extensive quantitative inquiry to map the listening audience in the Dublin market place, the project sets out to answer four key research questions. What are the underlying trends for listening to Irish public service radio? How does Irish public radio attain and hold listener loyalty? What do listeners perceive as the value of public service radio? And, do core opinions and perceptions on public service broadcasting change over time? While acknowledging the differences in scale, the thesis draws upon comparisons of the PSB model as it pertains to BBC network radio. The study's findings provide new insights into the listener's relationship with radio – its programmes and its presenters. It concludes with a series of suggestions to re-invigorate the concept of PSB on behalf of the licence fee payers in Ireland.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of M.Phil (Master of Philosophy), is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

The thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or university.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research. The Institute has permission to keep, to lend or to copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
Candidate

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Explanation of terms/abbreviations used

All-Adult	Listeners aged 15-years or over.
AIRPI	Association of Independent Producers of Ireland.
BAI	Broadcast Authority of Ireland
BBC	British Broadcasting Company.
BCI	Broadcast Authority of Ireland (regulatory body before the BAI)
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
GPO	General Post Office.
Home Local	Local independent-commercial radio station operating in county or city area (e.g. 98FM, East Coast FM, Clare FM).
JNLR	Joint National Listenership Research.
NPR	National Public Radio
Ofcom	Independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries.
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting.
Quasi	Almost national in coverage. Limited availability of FM frequencies to enable the station to achieve 98 percent coverage.
Reach	refers to the penetration of radio into the universal population at large. The measure is used to refer to the percentage of the population who listened to at least some of a programme or station during a day or week.

Explanation of terms/abbreviations used (continued)

Replenishers This term refers to those who may have an interest in speech radio, but tend to be slightly younger and lighter listeners than that of the RTE Radio1 core audience and are therefore important to the regeneration of RTE Radio 1.

RTE Radio Telefís Éireann .

Share A figure expressed as a percentage and is concerned with the actual audience that listens to one or more stations - the actual proportion of a market accounted for by a particular service. It is calculated by adding up the amount of time spent listening to the different stations and expressing figures for each station as a percentage of all listening.

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history

Jan 1922	BBC Ltd is formed with John Reith as its first General Manager. The Station is known as 2LO
1 Jan 1926	2RN began broadcasting from 36 Little Denmark Street, Dublin
1925	Seamus Clandillon was appointed as the first Director of Broadcasting
26 April 1927	Cork studio opens from the former Women's Gaol in Sunday's Well with a 1kw transmitter known as 6CK
1927	Mairead Ni Ghrada appointed as Woman Organiser
31 Dec 1927	First sponsored programme for Euthymol toothpaste
1928	2RN moves to its new headquarters in the General Post Office (GPO)

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

1932	New 60kw transmitter (later boosted to 100kw) installed in Athlone to cover broadcasting of The Eucharistic Congress
1933	Radio Luxembourg begins English language service
1935	Dr T.J Kieran transferred from the Department of External Affairs to succeed Sean Clandillon as Director of Broadcasting
1936	O'Donnell Abu chosen as 2RN's new identification signature tune
14 Aug 1938	Michael O'Hehir to become known as the 'voice of Gaelic Games' gives his first match commentary
1942	First broadcast of <i>Desert Island Discs</i> on BBC Home Service
16 May 1945	Taoiseach Eamon de Valera responds to Winston Churchill
Oct 1947	Mobile recording unit with disc recorder introduced
Dec 1949	Tape recording introduced at Radio Éireann studios

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

15 Aug 1950	Angelus bells first broadcast to mark the Feast of the Assumption and Holy Year
1951	First broadcast of <i>The Archers</i> , the world's longest running radio soap
1 Jan 1953	Maurice Gorham appointed as Director of Broadcasting
1953	Popular Irish dancing programme <i>Take the Floor</i> presented by Din Joe begins
14 th April 1955	Daily soap <i>The Kennedys of Castleross</i> begins
June 1960	RTE established under the <i>Broadcasting Authority Act 1960</i> and 2RN becomes Raidió Éireann
1 Dec 1961	First edition of the <i>RTV Guide</i> published
10 Dec 1961	The News Service moves from Henry Street studios to new Montrose studios at Donnybrook

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

31 Dec 1961	Telefis Éireann begins on New Year's Eve
6 July 1962	<i>The Late Late</i> Show goes on the TV for the first time intended as a summer 'filler'
1966	Radio Dublin founded by Ken Sheehan begins pirate broadcasting
1967	BBC Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4 commence leaving behind the Home and Light services
1971	Telefis Éireann begins broadcasting in colour
2 April 1972	RTE Raidio Na Gaeltachta commences broadcasting from its main studio at Caskla in Connemara
24 Sept 1973	Live radio broadcasting begins from the new Radio Centre at Montrose

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

May 1977	RTE provides a one-week local radio experiment Dublin's Liberties on VHF
2 Nov 1978	RTE launches its second television channel, RTE 2
31 May 1979	RTE Radio 2 launches
31 May 1979	Marian Finucane presents the first edition of <i>Women Today</i> on RTE Radio 1
9 Sept 1980	'Super pirate' Sunshine Radio commences broadcasting from the Sands Hotel, Portmarnock, County Dublin
March 1982	The Gerry Ryan Show begins as a tabloid three-hour mid-morning show
Sept 1982	'Super pirate' station <i>Radio Nova</i> commences broadcasting
16 June 1982	Unabridged and uninterrupted 30-hour reading of Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i> on Radio 1

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

1984	<i>Morning Ireland</i> begins at 8.00AM on RTE Radio 1
1985	Frankie Byrne presenter of The Jacobs Programme (or <i>Dear Frankie</i> as it was also known) presented the last show after 22 years on air
1988	<i>Radio and Television Act, 1988</i> . Provides for a network of independent radio stations and one television station to be under the control of the newly created Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC)
1989	Dublin station <i>Classic Hits 98FM</i> is the first of the new independent local stations to come on air
1 Sept 1989	RTE teams up with RTL to launch Tara radio to broadcast a long-wave music service into the UK
4 Sept 1989	Century Radio commences as the country's first national independent station

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

1990	<i>Broadcasting Act, 1990</i> places advertising cap on RTE
Nov 1991	<i>Century Radio</i> closes after six years and losses of IR £7million
24 May 1996	RTE Online launches
17 Mar 1997	Independent national station <i>Radio Ireland</i> launches
Dec 1998	The <i>Gay Byrne Show</i> comes to an end with an outside broadcast outside Bewley's on Grafton Street.
1 May 1999	RTE launches <i>Lyric FM</i> , a new classical music and arts channel
1 March 2001	Winner of the 2002 <i>Prix Italia</i> , <i>Voicejazz</i> a radio documentary produced by Eithne Hand has its first broadcast
1 Jan 1992	The legendary Radio Luxembourg shuts down due to dwindling audiences and poor advertising

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

1994	Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht decides not to renew Section 31 of the <i>Broadcasting Act, 1960</i>
1995	First community radio station is licenced
1995	The UK introduces Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB)
1998	Ireland's first national commercial television, <i>TV3</i> commences broadcasting
2000	Eist, the Independent Broadcasters' Association is established to provide training for the independent radio sector
2001	<i>Broadcasting Act, 2001</i> is enacted and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is established subsuming the roles and enhancing the remit of the IRTC
2003	<i>Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003</i> is enacted
2004	The <i>Ox Report</i> is released by the Department of Communications, Marine and National Resources

2004	Ireland's first regional station, Beat FM commences broadcasting from Waterford
8 Nov 2005	The Broadcasting Funding Scheme, <i>Sound and Vision</i> , is launched
27 Nov 2005	Ciaran Mac Mathuna presents the last <i>Mo Cheol Thu</i> , which commenced in 1970
29 Sept 2006	NewsTalk 106FM commences as a 'quasi-national' station
2008	(AIRPI) The Association of Independent of Radio Producers of Ireland is founded
2009	<i>Broadcasting Act, 2001</i> is enacted and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) is established subsuming the roles and enhancing the remit of the BCI
27 Feb 2009	4FM is awarded a broadcast licence and commences as a 'multi-city' music driven service in February 2009.
30 April 2010	Death of RTE broadcaster Gerry Ryan

Timeline of key events in Ireland's broadcasting history (continued)

Sept 2010	Radio Nova commences broadcasting a classic rock format in Dublin. Named after the legendary 1980s pirate. The station is the last commercial station to be awarded a licence by the Broadcast Authority of Ireland (BAI).
Nov 2011	The Irish government initiates an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding RTE's defamation of Fr Kevin Reynolds following the <i>Primetime Investigates</i> programme <i>Mission to Prey</i>
March 2012	The BAI upholds a complaint made by Sean Gallagher relating to a tweet broadcast on the RTE TV programme <i>Frontline</i> Presidential debate and on the RTE Radio 1 programme <i>Today with Pat Kenny</i> the following day.
May 2012	BAI publishes Statement of Findings and Report of Investigating Officer on RTE's <i>Primetime Investigates</i> programme <i>Mission to Prey</i>
Nov 2012	RTE publishes <i>Report of the Editorial Review of The Frontline</i>

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview and context

Radio is a very popular medium in Ireland, with 86 percent of all Irish adults tuning-in on a daily basis¹. Its appeal is equal across all social classes. As a media device, it enjoys pride of place in the heart of the home, the kitchen – the key family social space (Crisell, 1994:229). While many homes have two or three television sets, most have five or six radio sets depending on what research you read. There's nothing objectionable in admitting to others that you enjoy listening to radio as compared to TV which is often considered a somewhat populist and low status medium.

In its early days, it wasn't only the listeners who discovered radio, advertisers too discovered the 30-million listeners that regularly tuned into Radio Luxembourg (Chapman, 1992; Rudin, 2007). Listeners become acquainted with the presenters and the programme content. Despite the long distances involved in its transmission, radio is an intimate medium and people imagine that they 'know' the presenters and picture them 'with headphones on, clean shirts and papers

¹ (source: JNLR/Ipos MRBI – 2010/3)

everywhere' (Taylor & Mullan, 1986:115). Former *Desert Island Discs* presenter Michael Parkinson believes that the radio interview works best when the presenter and guest believe that they are alone talking to one another (Parkinson, 2010:10). However, while the approach of programme makers is to develop and foster a 'one-to-one' relationship, both the presenter and the radio listener understand that the listener is part of a shared community of interests.

Radio offers programmes that fit in with the daily habits and lifestyles of the listeners (Scannell, 1996). Presenters also feel that they have a connection with their audience and sometimes share with the audience the intimate details of their own lives. In October 2011, the RTE *Morning Ireland* presenter Aine Lawlor startled her listeners when she announced: "That's all from us for the week, and from me for a while, as I'm taking a break for medical treatment. Thanks to all of you who have listened over the past, it's been, sixteen years".² On a more trivial note, in January 2012, Tony Blackburn revealed that his *Pick of the Pops* show was 'not actually live but recorded - so I'm actually at home listening to myself'.³ This revelation caused me reflect on the what might be going thought the audience's minds as they heard that statement. Would the presenter/listener relationship be in any way damaged following the presenter admitting to not actually being 'there'? As he had mentioned being at home, I then began to conjure up a mental picture of just what type of house he might actually live in.

² Speaking on *Morning Ireland*, RTE Radio 1, 14th October 2011.

³ *Pick of the Pops*, broadcast on BBC Radio 2 (1300hrs-1500hrs), 31st December 2011.

There is of course the aesthetic aspect of the actual sound coming from the radio device - the comforting 'radio-as-company' factor. Barnett and Morrison found in their large-scale study of the radio audience, people who relied on radio for company, to fill a vacuum in their domestic spaces. One 'empty-nester' respondent who used radio to fill the silence stated, 'I dreamt when they were all sort of young that one day I could have a nice quiet house – but I miss the noise' (Barnett & Morrison, 1989:3).

Radio helps us navigate and make sense of our world. When Burmese pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi emerged from house arrest after fifteen years, one of the first things she mentioned in her first press conference was how radio enabled her to have 'a lifeline' to the outside world. The show she highlighted was Dave Lee Travis' *A Jolly Good Show* on the BBC World Service, this programme had made her 'world much more complete'.⁴ For some listeners, it is the music blend that is the attraction – the presenter as curator of the both past and the present. Music radio provides postcards from our past selves, the connection buried with our memory while new music provides a sense of the unexpected, enabling us to keep track and updated with the present. For others, it is the cadence of the voice reading the late-night *Shipping Forecast* on BBC Radio 4 showing as Hendy describes, 'the enduring attraction of the unadorned human voice' (2007:382).

⁴ Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13844131> [Accessed date 21.6.11]

Like a family member, radio's 'usefulness' is often concealed by its very taken-for-'grantedness' (Crisell, 1994). We often embrace and then forego presenters on an ongoing basis.

Within this study, comparisons are made between RTE and the BBC network radio and its public service broadcasting model. It is acknowledged that the population of Ireland and the UK differ vastly, and that comparing the BBC's scale with RTE's might result in a unequal contest, nonetheless it can be argued that a very worthwhile comparison can be made and commented on. All BBC national radio services can be received in Ireland, and moreover, the BBC, it might be argued, provides perhaps the highest benchmark in terms of quality and creativity against which qualified comparisons with RTE Radio 1 can be made and measured.

The Broadcast Authority of Ireland's (BAI⁵) strategy for 2011-2013 (Strategic Goal 7) specifically mentions 'It will seek to promote media literacy initiatives which will enhance the public's ability to understand and interact with the broadcasting environment'.⁶ And so it is against this background, that this

⁵ The Broadcasting Act, 2009 established the BAI that replaced the Broadcast Commission of Ireland (BCI). The Act provided for the establishment of a single content regulator for all radio and television services in the Republic of Ireland.

⁶ BAI's Strategy 2011-2012 (p.22) http://www.bai.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/BAI_Strategy_2011-13_v2ENG.pdf [accessed date: 4th March 2012]

research project sets out to explore the radio audiences' understanding of some key issue on public service broadcasting and radio listening in general.

RTE Radio services

While this study focuses on RTE Radio 1 and to a limited extent, 2FM, it is worthwhile listing all radio services operated by RTE: The main FM stations RTE Radio 1 (news and full service), 2FM (Music and tabloid chat), Lyric FM (classical music station with arts coverage), and Raidio Na Gealtachta (Irish language station). RTE also operates a suite of digital stations, some of which are fully or semi-automated. The stations are broadcast on DAB and online. RTE Pulse (music), RTE Choice (selection of repeats and BBC/NPR etc programmes), 2XF (alternative music), RTE Jr (children's service), RTE Gold (automated oldies music station), RTE 1 extra (selection of radio repeats and speech radio from around the world).

Study background

This research is primarily qualitative in nature and is conducted with listeners residing in the Greater Dublin area. While RTE Radio 1 is a national public service station, it nevertheless competes for audience reach and share against a number of privately owned independent-commercial national and local stations

around the country.⁷ The Greater Dublin ‘franchise area’ is highly competitive and over the last two decades has seen many shifting sands beneath the ebbs and flows of the top-line audience listenership figures. A Dublin audience is chosen in that the area of study as it is somewhat unique due to the fact that the licensed independent-commercial stations are for the most part formatted music stations that carry top-of-the-hour news and are not viewed as ‘full service’ when compared to the model that has evolved over the last two decades in counties outside the Capital. In markets outside the Greater Dublin commuter belt – and where the Dublin stations don’t ‘spill over’ - the ‘Home Local’ stations perform particularly well against national competition in general. The large metropolis of Dublin might be considered to be somewhat generic in terms of not having a ‘full service’ local station equivalent to say, Radio Kerry or Donegal’s Highland Radio. One-time Dublin local speech broadcaster NewsTalk 106FM struggled for five hard years to build an audience before applying for, and then winning, the ‘quasi-national’ licence (covering most, but not all of the state) in 2006.

This research looks at the Dublin market as the selected research participants were residing in Dublin or the suburbs. So while the focus of this research project is on RTE Radio 1 as a national broadcaster, some quantitative comparisons are made between RTE Radio, 2FM and the independent-commercial competitors. 2 FM is the ‘younger’ sister station of RTE Radio 1; it is primarily a music station founded

⁷ Each Irish county usually has one local independent-commercial station licenced by the Broadcast Authority of Ireland. Larger cities can have a couple of licensed local stations operating. A full list of stations and their listenership figures is attached in the Appendix.

to provide a national music station and coming in the wake of a very vibrant culture of pirate music stations. 2FM will be looked at in the quantitative analysis and its importance to this study is the potential supply of audience ‘replenishers’ to RTE Radio 1. One of the main propositions of local services outside Dublin is that they provide an uncompromised local service. In Dublin, by contrast, with the exception of news coverage, each station delivers a particular music format. This collection of music stations along with the offerings of NewsTalk 106 FM, Today FM and ‘multi-city’ newcomer 4FM, plus the RTE offerings of Radio 1, 2FM, and Lyric FM provide the widest variety of radio programming for the listening audience and hence my focus on this audience as against a particular county, which would lend itself to a case study between the ‘Home Local’ station and RTE. In such a case, the contrast between the local station and a national public broadcaster would be too great. It could be suggested that RTE Radio 1 has honed its appeal to favour Dublin listeners over listeners from, for example, the ‘second’ city of Cork⁸. Conducting this research has been enormously self-educating for this researcher. Notions and hunches that one subconsciously held are explored and challenged. Studying the literature and other radio research provided me with a detailed map against which I could measure my own modest efforts. Indeed, I am so grateful to the many scholars noted here who have charted the landscape and increased my knowledge on the area of radio audience research and of public service broadcasting.

⁸ Speaking at a presentation in March 2012 to AIRPI, the association of independent radio producers, Jim Jennings, Head of RTE Radio 1 acknowledged Radio 1’s declining lack of appeal in Cork.

While I held a belief that, in general, listeners might be somewhat *au fait* with RTE Radio 1's programming, I was particularly curious about the significance or value that these listeners would attach to public service broadcasting.

Research – some starting questions

In the context of my chosen listeners, some general questions arise:

What recollections do listeners have of childhood and adolescent radio listening?

And what are their adult perceptions of RTE Radio like now - living through a period of great uncertainty and unprecedented change - with increased competition and audience fragmentation?

What is it about RTE Radio 1 that appeals *or not* to them?

What role do its presenters play in attracting and keeping an audience?

How does that relationship mature or change over time?

The Research Questions

The above questions performed an underpinning reference that included a wider scope of inquiry to be examined. However, out of the starting questions above, four main research questions emerged that this thesis would set out to answer.

1. What are the underlying trends in listening to Irish public service radio?
2. How does the public radio attain and hold listener loyalty?

3. What do listeners believe is the value of Irish public service radio?
4. Do some core opinions and perceptions on public service broadcasting change over time?

These questions will be addressed by way of more specific research objectives as listed below.

Study focus

This study focuses on RTE Radio 1 and examines audience reception of notions of public service broadcasting in a context of a highly competitive environment. The environment in which PSB exists has changed dramatically across North-western Europe, the heartland of PSB. Economic austerity in the UK has forced the BBC to accept a licence freeze until 2017 coupled with the funding of the World Service, the Welsh language station S4C and BBC Monitoring.⁹ In Ireland, the Minister with responsibility for broadcasting has confirmed that he is in favour of a ‘broadcasting charge’ to replace the television licence fee. In effect, he has initiated the beginning of a more comprehensive debate about the provision of public service broadcasting and by extension, questions concerning the funding and entitlement of RTE to be the sole benefactor of the proposed broadcasting charge. Like the BBC, RTE has expanded beyond its core broadcasting activities and now has many detractors seeking to regain lost advertising or a slice of the licence fee

⁹ ‘BBC Cuts – How the axe will fall’ The Guardian 6.10.11
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/oct/06/bbc-bbc-expenses> (accessed: 1.2.2012)

pie. In the battle for audiences and advertising, has RTE Radio 1 jettisoned its distinctiveness in pursuit of commercial goals?

This study looks at the *history* of PSB. It looks at over a *decade* of audience data.

It takes a *snapshot* of audience qualitative opinion at two points in time in order to examine how some of key understandings and perceptions have changed, or not, on some key issues pertaining to public service broadcasting. The study also looks at the *future* options for RTE. The thesis explores understandings of PSB in the context of academic debate regarding the value and future of public service broadcasting both within radio studies and wider literature on public service media. The study is exploratory in design and therefore has no hypothesis. However at the conclusion stage it may be possible to suggest a hypothesis that might be tested in further research. Specifically, the study has the following aims:

1. To identify the reasons why RTE Radio 1 attracts and engages listeners and to evaluate critically the literature surrounding some key debates in public service broadcasting and points of interest in the evolution and development of RTE Radio 1.
2. To explore key issues surrounding the audiences' perceptions and understandings of RTE Radio 1 and public service broadcasting in particular and to examine at the role of the presenter and consider in-depth aspects of presentation and personality.

3. To explore the early experiences of users and the socialisation of radio as a medium and to establish if early listening references and impressions have any link to an individual's current listening pattern.
4. To see if some key opinions and perceptions of Public Service Broadcasting can be affected by the passage of time.

Thesis structure

The chapters in this thesis are presented in the following order:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter sets out the background and study questions for the thesis and outlines the context and background to the inquiry.

Chapter 2. Changing fortunes of public radio – a review of the literature. This chapter looks at issues related to the development of the medium and the development of BBC radio and RTE radio. Key arguments and discussions surrounding the concept and notion of public service broadcasting are examined. It also looks in detail at key points of interest in relation to RTE Radio 1's programming.

Chapter 3. Research Methods. A full account is given of how this project was set up including, the background quantitative pilot study which lead to the setting up of a larger qualitative research project. Methods of

analysis and research strategy are outlined. It also sets out and lists the key Aim and Objectives of this research project.

Chapter 4. The listening audience – context and change. This chapter provides an overview of the listening audience distilled from a secondary quantitative dataset. It provides an overview and context to the questions and dilemmas in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Qualitative research findings and discussion. This chapter presents the qualitative findings with a detailed discussion to provide interpretation and analysis to the theory and context of public service broadcasting and related aspects of broadcasting approach.

Chapter 6. Conclusion. The final chapter draws the thesis to a conclusion and presents answers to the stated Aims and Objectives of the research. It will also makes recommendations in light of the conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGING FORTUNES OF PUBLIC RADIO – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, issues related to the development of RTE Radio will be surveyed along with key arguments surrounding the notion of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), the balance between audience share and innovation and the threats to the concept of PSB. To set this in a wider context, it is also necessary to look at early BBC radio and developments in services and programmes there as useful comparisons can be made.

Radio – the invention

When Marconi cleverly joined up all the disconnected bits to ‘invent’ radio in 1896, it was conceived as a means of transmitting signals from point-to-point with little thought of putting anything other than signals on the carrier-wave (Eckersley 1941 quoted in Pine, 2002). It was only afterwards that programming was given consideration as an after-thought to try and persuade the public to buy wireless sets (Gorham, 1967; Scannell, 2010; Street, 2006; Williams, 1974). Indeed, the British Broadcasting Company as it was first known, was a consortium of commercial radio interests concerned mainly with advancing the sales of wireless sets.

It was an accident of history that overtook what was at first a commercial venture and sowed the seeds of what was to become public service broadcasting (Street, 2006).

Early BBC

In 1922, the British Broadcasting Company began its first transmissions. On 1st January, 1927, the British Broadcasting Company became the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) under Royal Charter with a Board of Governors and its first director general was John Reith (Briggs, 1977:49). Crisell comments that ‘Reith soon came to the conclusion that broadcasting was a precious national resource – too precious to be used merely to deliver audiences to wireless manufacturers’ (1997:14). Moreover, Reith saw the potential upside and the dangers; ‘rightly developed and controlled, it will become a world influence with immense potentialities for good – equally for harm, if its function is wrongly or loosely conceived’ (quoted in Pine, 2002:305-6).

The BBC devised a public service policy whereby not only did it want programmes to satisfy all strands of society, it wanted the ‘best’ and as Crisell points out, what constituted the ‘best’ was often contentious as it was ‘deemed the best by the middle-classes’ (Crisell, 1997:28). The public took to radio fast and airdials sprung up on the rooftops of towns and cities across the UK. A wide variety of programmes kept the audience tuned-in and the early Sunday schedules were of a solemn and serious nature (Gorham, 1967; Street, 2006:88). These ‘Reith Sundays’

as they were to become known, ‘isolated a moment of calm and reflection in the helter-skelter rush of modern life’ and something to which the pirates would take full advantage (Johns, 2011: 15).

American radio – early amateurs to commercial giants

American radio was up and running just before the BBC was formed. Early US radio was a playground for thousands of individual amateurs before big business and government began to act and concentrate the focus of radio from one-to-one to large-scale broadcasting (Hilmes, 2011:31-32). In 1922, the US government made radio licences available and several hundred stations were founded with the number rising to 1,400 by 1928. Among the biggest commercial broadcasters were the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System, formed in 1926 and 1927, respectively, and still familiar today as the television networks NBC and CBS. By the 1930s European governments opted for a state-run broadcasting system, whereas in the US, the government decided to auction off frequencies to the highest bidder paving the way in practice to a very commercial broadcasting culture (Starr, 2004: 328-329). The precursor to what is now referred to as public radio in the United States was college and university broadcasting. There had been around 200 such stations in the 1920s but by 1933, 75 percent of these stations are ceased broadcasting.

The Great Depression stalled radio development, however by 1931, radio’s ‘Golden Age’ had begun. Half of America’s homes had radios. Mothers listened in

the morning, children after school, and fathers with their families during prime time broadcasts. Isolated rural citizens could listen to sermons and gospel music from their farmhouse kitchens. In 1932, the nation awaited updates about the kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh's baby. From their kitchen tables, starting on March 12, 1933, families could hear Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Sunday evening "Fireside Chats" (Hilmes, 2011). Radio created dramas, sitcoms and soap operas. Stations even had their own symphony orchestras. After World War II, companies began investing in the new medium – television. A receptive audience was eager for the new entertainment medium (Fong-Torres, 2001:16). The 1950s began with a fear that radio was finished as a direct consequence of television's arrival; and the very genres that radio had created, television now took for itself. It wasn't just radio that suffered. By 1951, film attendances held their own in cities without a TV station but fell by 20 – 40 percent where TV provided an alternative to going out (Fisher, 2007:6).

Radio – the medium's effects

Early radio took hold fast and the audiences liked what they heard or at least tuned-in in their millions to what was on offer from the new medium. American researchers were the first to study radio's effects. Cantril and Allport (1935) wrote about the effects of radio following a growing increasing concerns about what effect radio listening was having on the population; 'why do people listen for hours on end, what do they like to hear, how much do they understand?' (cited in O'Neill, 2011). 1938 saw the H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* - and the much-reported

panic that ensued, which propelled academia into exploring the radio audience (Heyer, 2003; Sterling, 2004). The ‘Uses and Gratification’ model emerged as the foremost research field to study the effects of mass communications on its audience (McQuail, 1984). Scannell (2009a:25) adds that it was the “intelligentsia’s ‘progressive’ view” in the 1930s that led to the need on both sides of the Atlantic for media education.

Early 2RN and Radio Éireann

Legal radio first came to the island first by way of BBC in Northern Ireland. In September 1924, 2BE came on the air with the announcer, Tyrone Guthrie’s announcement; ‘Hello, hello, this is 2BE, the Belfast station of the British Broadcasting Company calling.’ (Pine, 2002). Somewhat before that, the world’s first and (illegal) news bulletin came via the Republican patriots on 25th April 1916 - albeit in Morse code! (McLuhan, 2001:323).

Broadcasting in Ireland began in 1926 from studios and offices in a Post Office premises at 36 Little Denmark Street, just off Henry Street in Dublin’s city centre. The station opened with announcer Seamus Hughes stating; ‘Sé seo Raidio Bhaile Átha Cliath ag Glaodhach - this is 2RN the Dublin Broadcasting station calling’. Douglas Hyde then addressed the audience or ‘listeners-in’ as they were then referred to. The address spoke of a ‘new era in which our nation shall take its place amongst other nations of the world ... It is a sign that times have changed when we can take out place amongst other nations, and use the wireless ... Eire is

not completely saved yet, and will not be until the foreign influence is wiped out' (Pine, 2002).

Day's recent work, building on Gorham's (1967) account on the origin of Irish radio, discusses the ideological and political influences at this pivotal time in the early formation of the State and the fear that was felt that any investors in any commercial venture might lead on to a service with undue and undesired British influence (Day, 2012).

Many sections of the press hailed it as the 'beginnings of a New Era' (Clarke, 1986:46). Initially, the home produced content was supplemented by up to thirty-five hours of relays from the BBC, but by 1932, this had dropped to a mere two hours (Pine, 2002). Having only one studio, there were frequent silences or an 'interlude' as furniture was moved about to accommodate the next programme. In October 1928, 2RN relocated to new studio at the General Post Office (GPO), O'Connell Street, Dublin.

Money was tight and Clandillon was expected to produce an entire week's programmes on a budget of £120 (ibid:157). It was said that Clandillon would try to persuade anyone passing along in the corridor to go in and sing a song or recite a poem (Gorham, 1967:25). Indeed, complainants' letters to Clandillon often referred to the frequent re-appearance of the same live singers and artists on the night-time schedule.

What was radio like at the time?

In order to own a wireless set, it was necessary to purchase a licence. In 1947, licences stood at 186,727 and by the end of the following year that figure rose by nearly forty percent to 261,321 (Pine, 2002). Unlike BBC, 2RN carried advertising. Early rates were £5 for Irish companies and double that for foreign firms. The ads were more mentions and as such evolved into fully sponsored programmes that would prove to be some of the most popular during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Pine compares Eamon de Valera's Saint Patrick's Day address to that of the Queen's at Christmas and his Eucharistic Congress address as Ireland's equivalent to the King's speech at the 1924 Empire Exhibition (ibid, 2002:173).

The hours of broadcasting were 11.00am – 12 noon and from 5.00pm – 11.00pm. Reduced hours operated on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day. Eamon de Valera, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State officially opened the Athlone 100KW transmitter on 6th February 1933. The new national radio service became known as Radio Athlone. In 1936, 'O'Donnell Abú' became the Radio Athlone call sign and on the 29th December 1932 Radio Éireann replaced Radio Athlone as the name of national radio service (Street, 2006:232).

The new station was expected to all manner of things. As Tim Pat Coogan put it:

It was expected to do a great many things that were not demanded of other national radio services, most of them far better equipped. It was expected not merely to reflect every aspect of national activity but to

create activities that did not yet exist. It was expected to revive the speaking of Irish; to foster a taste for classical music; to revive Irish traditional music; to keep people on the farms [...] to reunite the Irish people at home and those overseas; to end Partition. All this in addition to broadcasting's normal duty to inform, educate, and entertain. And all in a programme amounting (if advertising time as excluded) to some five and a half hours a day! (quoted by Coogan in McRedmond 1926: 51).

Having a wireless set was considered a novelty and very unique. Indeed, there was no such thing as going into a shop and buying a receiver off the shelf (Kelly, 1976:17). The author and broadcaster Joseph O'Connor recalled when he was just eight-years-old in his grandmother's house - the radio was covered in lace cloth and sat pride of place on the dresser. When his grandfather came in from work, the first thing he would say was: 'was there anything on the radio?'.¹⁰ Anthony Cronin tells of the moment that he heard radio for the very first time. A lay teacher was one of the first to sport the new 'plus fours' and one of the first to have a wireless. He brought it to Cronin's house for a demonstration and connected it to the light in the ceiling, plunging the place and the assembled family into darkness.

When all was prepared to his satisfaction, Mr Heffernan began to twiddle the knobs [...] the machine began to emit a curious sort of

¹⁰ Joseph O'Connor 'Radio Summers' broadcast on RTE Radio 1's *Drivetime* Tx date: 19/8/2009. Podcast <http://www.podcastdirectory.com/podshows/5031069>

birdcall. ‘Whee-wheewhee. Whoo-who-who- Whee-whee-whee,’ it said. During the hiatus our expectant faces were illuminated only by a ghastly glow from the dial and it became very cold. The kitchen had a stone floor and the range was out, so it must have been while we were waiting that my mother caught the chill which she declared she never shook off and use to refer to it in the after-years as the cold she caught from the wireless (Cronin, 1926:63).

By 1925-26 there were 10,00 wireless sets in Ireland, 3,000 were licensed at a fee of £1. Later reduced to 10 shillings, by the end of 1926, there were 25,000 sets in use as Pine writes:

Crystal sets without a battery, cost 7/6d. (€7.50 circa 2000). Valve sets with amp and speaker that used a ‘wet battery’ and cost £4.16. (£4.80 old Irish pounds) for a 2-valve model and as much as £60 (€1500 circa 2000) (Pine, 2002).

The station was criticised for having too much or too little of Irish, talks, news or sport. It was even suggested in the Dáil that if the Director couldn’t improve the quality of the programmes, then airtime should be given over to the people behind the sponsored programmes (O’Broin, 1976:4).

Listeners too, were often highly critical of the output and wrote to the press to outline their views:

On Saturday night ... the matter broadcasted was on the most trumpery description even for a text performance. Selections from the Maritana, no matter by whom played, filled me with homicidal thoughts... (Evening Herald 17 December 1925 quoted in Pine, 2002:144)

In 1949, Radio Éireann purchased two recording vans that Sean MacReamoinn and Seamus Ennis put to great use around the country; and by the end of 1949, the station had its first tape machine installed capable of recording up to fifteen minutes on a long-playing disc (Gorham, 1967:184). Gorham's account covers up to 1960 and the book details the major events – mainly religious celebrations – that the station covered. In 1950 following a proposal from Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, the station introduced the Angelus bells to mark the Holy Year, a tradition that survives to the present day.

In 1953, Radio Éireann carried out two listenership studies.¹¹ The surveys covered 3,500 families and found that 85% listened to Radio Éireann, 53% to Radio Luxembourg and 49% to the BBC Light programme. In the same year, one of the longest-running and most popular programmes was launched; called *Take the Floor* and presented by Din Joe, the weekly programme featured Irish and ceili dancing on the radio and continued until May 1972.

¹¹ (source RTE). See http://www.rte.ie/laweb/images/brc/brc50s_aresearch550x700.gif [accessed date. 3.10.2011)

Table 2.0 below is example from the schedule from the mid-Fifties.

Table 2.0 Radio schedule from the mid-Fifties

<i>8.00AM</i>	<i>News</i>
<i>8.15-9.00</i>	<i>Sponsored</i>
<i>9.15</i>	<i>Signpost: Close Down</i>
<i>1.00-130PM</i>	<i>Sponsored</i>
<i>1.30</i>	<i>News and Topical Talk</i>
<i>1.45-2.30</i>	<i>Sponsored</i>
<i>2.30</i>	<i>Closedown</i>
<i>5.00</i>	<i>Bambouno the Terrible</i>
<i>5.30</i>	<i>Junior Choir and the Orchestra of the Dublin Municipal School of Music</i>
<i>5.57</i>	<i>Interlude</i>
<i>6.00PM</i>	<i>The Angelus</i>
<i>6.01</i>	<i>Nuacht agus chaint na dardaoine</i>
<i>6.20</i>	<i>“Here’s the Doctor”</i>
<i>6.25</i>	<i>Racing Results. Announcements. Signpost</i>
<i>6.30</i>	<i>News</i>
<i>6.45</i>	<i>“Place the Accent”</i>

7.15	<i>“Ag ple na Nuchta”</i>
7.45	<i>“Journey in the Middle East”</i>
8.00PM	<i>“Take the Floor”</i>
8.45	<i>“Between Ourselves”</i>
9.30	<i>“Christmas Lullaby”</i>
10.00	<i>Nuacht</i>
10.15	<i>News</i>
10.20	<i>Sponsored</i>
11.00	<i>Amhrain</i>
11.15	<i>Dance Music</i>
11.30	<i>Late sports results and Close Down</i>

It can be seen in Table 2.0 that commercially sponsored programmes were very much a feature of the radio schedule. Devised by Arks Advertising for Fry-Cadbury *The Kennedys of Castleross* was a popular lunchtime drama and ran from 1955 until 1973. Other popular shows were *Transatlantic Call* with Bart Bastible, the *IMCO Show* and *The Waltons Show* with Leo Maguire with his famous catch phrase ‘if you’re going to sing a song, sing an Irish song!’

Radio as an everyday utility

Moore (1993) in his oral history research of elderly listeners’ memories of early radio, pieced together a cultural history of early radio from the listeners’ perspective. The focus of his research was to understand how broadcasting’s relationship with the home began to take hold. Borrowing a phrase from Lesley Johnston (1981:167), Moore sought to find out how early radio was involved in ‘capturing time and space in the home’. Building on Donzelot’s (1980) work on the

changing and reorganisation of French families in the home during the transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism, Moores suggests that radio 'consolidated and accentuated' what he calls 'the withdrawal to interior space' (1993:76-77).

In this early stage of radio broadcasting, listeners often had to assemble their sets using 'wet' and 'dry' batteries from kits. To receive programmes without interference meant spending time and effort adjusting the homespun aerial. The considerable expense of the radio sets and the light technical knowledge required to successfully tune it in, meant that the man as 'head of the household' was thereafter responsible for its operation and choice of programmes (Moores, 1993). The subjects of Moores' study reflect a time when the entire family used to sit around the radio, a time before the arrival of television and a task perhaps not possible today for numerous reasons.

Radio in Ireland in the late-1970s resembled the UK prior to the arrival of pirates to the mainstream stage in the 1960s. RTE radio was staid and not appealing to any of the youth who were getting major influences from the UK and beyond (Day, 2012; Mulryan, 1988). Scores of pirates started and continued up to the late 1980s when the government of the day introduced legislation that would pave the way for independent-commercial radio. In 1978, RTE had been granted a national music channel that started as a youth music channel that hoped to capture the attention of the Ireland's under 25-year-olds. However, the plethora of pirates understood a sense that the youth were feeling for the accepted orthodoxy of the 1950s that was still hanging in the air, as Day suggests:

A Weltanschauung that was modern and progressive was, at least partially, created through the music and rebellion of pirate radio. Ireland in the 1970s was emerging from extreme economic underdevelopment, poverty and the control of the Catholic Church.(Day, 2012:33)

RTE Radio and social change

Radio Éireann reflected and part-shaped a conservative Ireland in the Fifties. The ‘Troubles’ dominated news and current affairs coverage from the late 1960s and continuing into the following two decades. However, one programme and its presenter stood out all above all others as being an agent for setting the agenda for social change and is considered here given the important position that personality presenters have played in the developing public service ethos in Irish radio. The *Gay Byrne Hour* started broadcasting on 5th February 1973 and initially it was seen as a bit of light entertainment between two current-affairs shows. Its target audience were the ‘housewives’ so described by the JNLR at the time and so beloved by the advertisers who bought airtime on Irish national radio.

It is worth mentioning, that RTE Radio had no commercial competition before 1989. During the 1960s and up to the late-1970s, few people owned a household telephone and there was a three-year waiting list if one requested one from the monopoly provider, the Department of Post and Telegraphs. *The Gay Byrne Show*

had arrived at a particular time in the history of Ireland and was instrumental in facilitating discourse on change about Irish society and culture.

The unique appeal of the show was made possible by the presenter's ability to flit from consumer and domestic issues to hard-nosed current-affairs. Byrne understood show business and 'had a nose' for a good story that would rouse and convulse middle-Ireland. Byrne's career as the host and producer of *The Late, Late Show* had given him a thorough understanding of the complexities and diverse constituencies that made up the Irish audience (Byrne, 1972). However, underpinning Gay Byrne's smooth and polished presentation on his radio show was a team of researchers and liberal-minded producers who structured the show with great content around Byrne, 'the housewives' favourite'.

In 1979, the show changed to a two-hour format and John Caden, the series producer saw an opportunity to use the extended time to engage the loyal audience with material less trivial in nature. Gay Byrne was conservative by character but knew instinctively what would make good radio. Byrne's producers used the programme to open a door on a hidden Ireland. The crowning moments of *The Gay Byrne Show* was the period of the early to mid-1980s with three issues dominating: the abortion amendment, the sacking of Eileen Flynn, a teacher in New Ross, Co. Wexford and the death of Ann Lovett and her still-born child in Granard.

In January 1984, Ann Lovett a 15-year-old schoolgirl died alone while giving birth at the foot of the grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a graveyard in Granard, County Longford. John Caden the series producer of *The Gay Byrne Show* explains:

We knew this was a tragedy not just for herself and her own family, but also for every family. We knew that within every family in Ireland, somewhere lay the possibility that this could happen to them. We knew, that out of that extraordinary imagery of the grotto and the child...we had contained so much of our culture, so much of our attitude towards morality, so much of our attitude towards sexuality...not so much our own sexual feelings but the manner in which we impose them on others (Caden interviewed for the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Archive Hour*. 2003).

This opened up a seminal national debate about women given birth outside marriage and as Fintan O' Toole put it '[Anne Lovett's death] burst through a dam of repression and a wave of untold story swept towards the man who had become the nation's confessor' (O'Toole, interviewed for the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Archive Hour*. 2003). The programme was given over to the issue for almost a week as the presenter and team read out listeners' letters. It was an epoch-making event for the social and political importance of the country.

Eileen Flynn, a teacher in New Ross was living ‘openly’ in the town with a married man in the town where she worked. Shortly after, they had a child and Flynn was summarily sacked from her position in the local school. Kevin O’Connor reported for *The Gay Byrne Show* on the case that Flynn had taken to the Unfair Dismissals Tribunal. O’Connor reported on the two women at the centre of the hearing; one a nun who had been in a convent all her life and who had a duty of care to the children and parents of the Catholic school and Flynn a young woman who had fallen in love with a married man and became a surrogate mother to the man’s other children.

Along with *The Late, Late Show*¹² – the world’s longest-running weekly television chat show - that Byrne also presented, the daily radio show was an important instrument in a changing Ireland.

Up to the 1980s, topics and issues suffered by ordinary individuals had remained largely unspoken about or were unheard of. With *The Gay Byrne Show* they were being aired on national radio for the very first time. As John Caden put it: ‘before this time, it would have been unthinkable on Irish radio to discuss such matters without having a priest in the studio to present ‘the moral view’ (Caden interviewed for the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Archive Hour*, 2003).

¹² First broadcast on 6th July 1962, *The Late Late Show* is the world’s longest-running television show. Gay Byrne continued to be the host up until 21st May 1999.

The show later covered the Constitutional challenge to abortion, the 1992 Bishop Eamonn Casey affair with Annie Murphy and the Father Brendan Smith scandal in 1994.

Byrne may have had, as Fintan O' Toole suggested, an 'overwhelming impatience with the old church-dominated culture'. However, by the 1990s, the subjects he was first to air were no longer his exclusive preserve. To some extent he had become a victim of his own success; other shows had arrived and vied to capture his mid-morning audience. The constituency of 'house wives' which made up the majority of the listening audience were encouraged to work outside the home as Ireland had begun a period of enormous economic growth between the years 1995 - 2007, the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' years.

Byrne had flagged his imminent retirement and for a period he presented the show on a three-day-a-week basis for about a year before presenting the very last *The Gay Byrne Show* via an outside broadcast from Grafton Street on Christmas Eve 1998. His final broadcast as presenter of *The Late Late Show* followed the following year on 21st May 1999.

Gay Byrne's distinctiveness as a broadcaster was his agile ability to move from light to serious issues via a show which incorporated him reading bits out from the daily newspapers; reviewing his own personal choice of books; reading out listeners' letters; playing records that ranged from Fr Sydney MacEwan singing

Bring Flowers of the Rarest each and every year on 1st May, to unknown vintage jazz records. Byrne was also the master of funny Dublin accents and his position in Irish radio culture remains largely unparalleled to this day. Behind Byrne as presenter was a largely unacknowledged team of skilled producers who crafted an innovative format capable of facilitating and being an agent, introducing topics and stories that drove social change. Granted there are magazine shows today but by comparison much of they discuss might appear trivial and unchallenging.

Radio - the intimate voice

Paddy Scannell has been at the forefront of scholars seeking to examine what radio and the experience of it actually is and seeks to understand and explain the role radio plays in the everyday daily life of its listeners' lives (Scannell, 1996, 2009b). In his most recent essay, he sets out to examine what it is that make radio so intimate to the listener (Scannell, 2010). 'All radio output' is he contends, 'reducible to two basic categories: music and talk (ibid:12).

For speech, the microphone transformed the way singers could use their voices to deliver a more intimate style that became known as 'crooning' or crooners as they were called. After the great tenors of the Twenties and Thirties, it was Bing Crosby who epitomised the style in both recording and live radio broadcasts (Milner, 2009:122-126).

Scannell contends that it took the Talks Department of the BBC some time to become acquainted with the techniques necessary to deliver radio in a more naturally sounding manner. The breakthrough came when broadcasters adapted their approach to take cognisance of the way that people were listening in their daily lives adopting ‘a conversational style of address, to talk to the listeners ‘out there as if they were an audience of one’ (Scannell, 2010:13-14). It was this change in approach, honed over the years, which would give radio its unique selling point over other mass communications - its ability to speak directly to the listener. Coupled with music that is either the finest or the most popular and voices that connect to both the emotional and social, it is not hard to see why radio connects in a very personal manner to the listener the way it does.

Television’s unique ability to foster its intimate relationship with a distant audience is via subtle facial, hand and body gestures by the host. According to Horton and Wohl ‘this simulacrum of conversational give and take may be called parasocial interaction’ (Horton & Wohl, 1957:215). Parasocial relationship as defined by Horton and Wohl ignores soap operas and drama production and emphasises the one-sided nature of the relationship or TV host and the viewer.

However, some might see radio as having a disadvantage without the moving image, but it is the voice – whether it’s singing or speaking – that is most expressive when it comes to communication on a conversational or natural level. The voice reveals the soul or truth of what is been expressed. Nuances of humour,

personality, place of upbringing are revealed in an intimate way to the listener. Ira Glass (2011) raises a very interesting question about the ‘tone’ of voice on American public radio with reference to the NPR/SmithGeiger Survey which he says found that listeners who should be recruited to news shows on NPR (National Public Radio) are in fact, turned away by the serious/academic/preaching tone from the presenters and reporters. Quoting from the survey, he quotes one respondent:

This type of story could be interesting, but the reporter’s voice and intonation is soooo affected, upper class, wasp-like, Ph.D. student-like, it detracts from the story. She speaks like she is writing a novel (cited in Glass, 2011)

In chapter 5, the ‘Qualitative Research Findings And Discussion’ chapter, the distinction, as perceived by the listener between the utterances of generic music DJs and the discourse of top-class radio presenters appears to count for a lot in how effectively the DJ/presenter is perceived to communicate and connect with the listener.

American public radio

American public broadcasting has always played second fiddle to the more popular and big business model that is American commercial radio. In 1967, non-commercial radio stations numbered just 326 out of which 220 were licenced to colleges and universities. Listenership was largely in the evenings, the complete

inverse to the more popular and more ubiquitous commercial radio (Hilmes, 2011:39). Public radio has always relied on large and small donors to keep it afloat. During the 1950s as listeners became viewers, support went from radio towards television and in 1964, The Ford Foundation which was once the largest funder of educational radio, suddenly ceased its support of NPR (ibid). However, over the next decade, interest grew in the idea for publicly funded broadcasting. The very medium and word ‘radio’ very nearly didn’t make it into President Lyndon Johnson’s 1969 Public Broadcasting Act:

Very late on a winter night in 1967, those words were typed repeatedly, then cut out with scissors and Scotch-taped onto the pages of the Public Television bill that was about to leave the White House and to be introduced to Congress. At the last minute, the draft, language was changed to insert “and radio” after every significant mention of radio (Adams, 2010:21)

National Public Radio (NPR) commenced broadcasting on 3rd May 1971. NPR serves as a national syndicator to a network of 900 public radio stations dotted across major towns and cities around the country. The two most popular shows are the news sequences, *Morning Edition* and the midday show *All Things Considered*. While NPR has to provide unbiased news (a fact not always accepted by Republicans and conservative), talk radio began to dominate the AM broadcast band, with music shifting to the clearer sounding FM band (Hilmes, 2011).

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), repealed the Fairness Doctrine, a 1949 policy that required broadcasters to show both sides of controversial issues. In the late-1980s a period of liberalisation took hold in broadcasting. Began by the Reagan administration and following the introduction of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton, the biggest shakeup in the history of commercial broadcasting took place; radio stations were sold and the companies that owned them were merged and then in turn swallowed-up by bigger commercial beasts. By 2004, Clear Channel, Cumulus, Viacom and Citadel together controlled 70 percent or more of almost every US radio market (Fisher, 2007; Foege, 2009).¹³ Between the years 2000 to 2008, NPR saw its average number of weekly listeners rise from 14.1 million to 20.9 million listeners (source: NPR). NPR has had to face very difficult times as it continues to provide programmes on much reduced government grants and declining funding from corporate underwriters. Its previous CEO, Vivian Schiller took over the helm in 2009 and embarked on a mission that successfully positioned the network as a multi platform media organisation. Schiller resigned in 2011 over comments made by one of the organisation's top fundraisers in relation to the Tea Party movement and their efforts to 'defund' NPR.¹⁴

¹³ In December 2012, The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) announced that it is considering new rules to allow more newspapers, radio and television stations to be crossed owned. <http://transition.fcc.gov/ownership/> [accessed date 28th December 2012]. The review announced in the Christmas rush period demanded interested responses within days. Some opponents fear more homogenized programming replacing diverse local news and culture. See: Radio Survivor 'Memo to FCC: one radio station makes a difference' <http://www.radiosurvivor.com/2013/01/07/memo-to-fcc-one-radio-station-makes-a-difference/> [accessed date : 8 January 2012].

¹⁴ 'Vivian Schiller, NPR CEO, Resigns' in *The Huffington Post* date, 3rd September 2011. Online: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/09/vivian-schiller-npr-ceo-r_n_833348.html [accessed date: 12/12/12]

The Public Service Broadcasting model

If Marconi is credited as being the inventor of radio, then John Reith is to be credited with the ideal of public service broadcasting. The argument for PSB was first formulated in the UK by a committee chaired by Sir Frederick Skykes (Raboy, 2008:362). It reported that ‘the control of such potential power of public opinion and the life of the nation ought to remain with the State, and that the operation of so important a national service ought not to be allowed to become an unrestricted commercial monopoly’ (quoted in Raboy, 2008:362). The Sykes Report led to the establishment of the BBC, turning the British Broadcasting Company into Corporation and so it was that public broadcasting was born. Reith was a controversial figure who strongly believed in giving the public what he thought they needed as against what they might desire.

Ian Jacobs, director-general of the BBC from 1952 to 1959, in an internal document called Basic Propositions, described public service broadcasting as:

[A] compound of a system of control, an attitude of mind, and an aim, which if successfully achieved results in a service which cannot be given by any other means. The system of control is full independence, or the maximum degree of independence that Parliament will accord. The attitude of mind is an intelligent one capable of attracting to the service the highest quality of character and intellect. The aim is to give the best and the most comprehensive service of broadcasting to the

public that is possible. The motive that underlies the whole operation is a vital factor; it must not be vitiated by political or commercial consideration (cited in Tracey, 2008).

Much later, the Broadcasting Research Unit (1985) set down what they considered to be the eight key principles. See Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1 Broadcasting Research Unit's Eight Key Principles of PSB.

1. Universality: Geographic – broadcast programmes should be available to the whole population.
2. Universality of Payment – one main instrument of broadcasting should be directly funded by the corpus of users.
3. Broadcasting should be structured so as to encourage competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers.
4. Universality of Appeal – broadcast programmes should cater for all interests and tastes.
5. Broadcasting should be distanced from all vested interests, and in particular from those of the government of the day.
6. Broadcasters should recognise their special relationship to the sense of national identity and community.

7. Minorities, especially disadvantaged minorities should receive particular provision.
8. The public guidelines for broadcasting should be designed to liberate rather than restrict the programme makers.

Brown suggests that the list above in Table 2.1, while overlapping in parts, is similar to the definition supplied by the UK's Peacock Report in 1986 which described PSB as 'simply any major modification of purely commercial provision [...] resulting from public policy ' (cited in Brown, 1996:5).

Ofcom, the UK's broadcasting and telecommunications regulator, has since 2004 provided a very detailed definition of public service broadcasting and in its Annual Report in 2007 added 'trust' to its list of service characteristics.

Table 2.2 Ofcom's PSB Purposes and Characteristics

<p>PSB purposes</p> <p>Purpose 1: Informing our understanding of the world - To inform ourselves and others and to increase our understanding of the world through news, information and analysis of current events and ideas</p> <p>Purpose 2: Stimulating knowledge and learning -To stimulate our interest in and knowledge of arts, science, history and other topics through content that is accessible and can encourage informal learning</p> <p>Purpose 3: Reflecting UK cultural identity - To reflect and strengthen our cultural identity through original programming at UK, national and regional level, on occasion bringing audiences together for shared experiences</p> <p>Purpose 4: Representing diversity and alternative viewpoints - To make us aware of different cultures and alternative viewpoints, through programmes that reflect the lives of other people and other communities, both within the UK and elsewhere</p>
<p>PSB characteristics</p> <p>High quality - well-funded and well-produced</p> <p>Original – new UK content rather than repeats or acquisitions</p> <p>Innovative – breaking new ideas or re-inventing exciting approaches, rather than copying old ones</p> <p>Challenging – making viewers think</p> <p>Engaging – remaining accessible and attractive to viewers</p> <p>Widely available – if content is publicly funded, a large majority of citizens need to be given the chance to watch it</p> <p>Trust⁷</p>

(Ofcom, 2010:4)

The BBC describes its PSB principles under the following three headings:¹⁵

Table 2.3 BBC Mission, Vision and Values statement

Our Mission: To enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain.

Our vision: To be the most creative organisation in the world.

Our values: Trust is the foundation of the BBC: we are independent, impartial and honest. Audiences are at the heart of everything we do [...] we pride in delivering quality and value for money [and that] Creativity is the lifeblood of our organisation.

¹⁵ BBC Mission and Value statements <http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/purpose/> [accessed: 31.8.11]

Quite similar to the BBC's in Table 2.3 above, RTE sets out its PBS and programming commitments as follows: RTE's Strategic Framework¹⁶, sets out its vision, mission and values as:

Table 2.4 RTE – Public Service Broadcasting principles.

RTE's Vision: 'RTÉ's Vision is to grow the trust of the people of Ireland as it informs, inspires, reflects and enriches their lives'

RTÉ's Mission is to: Nurture and reflect the cultural and regional diversity of all the people of Ireland. Provide distinctive programming and services of the highest quality and ambition, with the emphasis on home production. Inform the Irish public by delivering the best comprehensive independent news service possible. Enable national participation in all major events

RTÉ's Values: Operate in the public interest, providing News and Current Affairs that is fair and impartial, accurate and challenging. Connect with our audiences by understanding and satisfying their needs. Deliver a value for money service.

¹⁶ RTE's Strategic Framework http://www.rte.ie/about/pdfs/vision_mission_values_english.pdf
[accessed: 31.8.110]

Be creative in everything we do. Be honest and transparent in all of our activities.

Take personal responsibility for pursuing the organisation's goals.

In Table 2.4 above, a key element of RTE's mission is to 'Inform the Irish public by delivering the best comprehensive independent news service possible'. The BBC in a policy document *Extending Choice* expressed the provision of news as being the top and most essential characteristic in its public purpose 'Firstly, the BBC should aim to provide the comprehensive, in-depth and impartial news and information coverage across a range of broadcasting outlets that is needed to support a fair and informed national debate' (Franklin quoted in Starkey, 2009:4)

Bob Collins, former Director General of RTE, spoke about the problem of defining the notion of PSB. Speaking in 2003, he remarked:

[...] perhaps the reality is that the question to be asked is not "what is the definition of public service broadcasting?" but, rather, "what are the goals of public policy in broadcasting in any given society now and in the medium term? (Collins, 2003).

For Collins, in common with Raymond Williams' (1974) view of PSB, it was the human, social and cultural questions which remained at the core of PSB debates. Collins also recognised that for public broadcasting to be relevant it must connect with the general public and to be worthwhile 'must be central to the life of the community' (ibid).

Notwithstanding the cultural and social principles that remain at the heart of any definition of PSB, nevertheless, the society and environment in which public service broadcasters operate has continually shifted and evolved and the technological landscape has presented both challenges and opportunities to the sector.

While at a fundamental level, radio has remained largely unchanged (O'Neill, 2010:17), PSBs have had to adapt and in some respects drive a fine line between addressing and servicing their PSB obligations while not appearing to be selling out on the founding principles. The PSB model is not set in stone and must be adjusted to suit the times we live in.

As various PSBs have retaken the lost market share of the 1980s or expanded and enlarged their web and online presence, there have been many calls of 'foul' from the commercial sector anxious that any exploitation should not result in loss of profit or market share that they consider to be theirs.

PSB – Adapting to market and funding pressures

There has always been a problem with defining the PSB ideal. On the one hand the basic Reithian principles such as ‘inform’, ‘educate’ and ‘entertain’ while for others it means supplying what the private market can’t provide.

Five months after the launch of satellite broadcaster BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch gave the 1989 McTaggard Lecture at the Edinburgh TV Festival. In it, he suggested that public service broadcasting ‘was giving the public what it wants, at a price it can afford’. He further elaborated on the notion of quality:

Much of what passes for quality on British television really is no more than a reflection of the values of a narrow elite which controls it and which has always thought its tastes are synonymous with quality – a view incidentally, that is natural to all governing classes (Murdoch quoted in Franklin, 2005).

Murdoch’s view of the BBC’s output being elitist didn’t go down well with the assembled audience. However, it did further alert disciples of PSB as to how the private sector perceived the PSB ideal now that there was an additional player in the BBC/ITV market-place, one that had the blessings of Mrs. Thatcher. Thatcher was about to appoint Marmaduke Hussey as Chairman of the BBC who would in

turn appoint John Birt to oversee radical changes to the modes of production within the corporation.

Tracey (1998) studied how BBC was 'taken' from a cultural organization concerned with great programmes with the highest production values into a location where new management was layered thick with new policies. Tracey essentially looks at society as reflected through the prism of public service broadcasting. Tracey saw the position of the BBC in the mid-nineties under the then Director-General John Birt as reflecting 'a confusion of purpose, and a belief in the techno-fix of management theory [...] It is all a bit like painting over rust – it looks shiny but it continues to decay underneath' (Tracey, 1998:261).

John Birt's reign as director general (1992-2000) of the BBC will be remembered as a period of creative stagnation and as the leader that introduced an abundance of middle and upper managers in tailored Italian suits. There is no doubt but that public service broadcasting was at a low point in the UK and the US at the turn of the century but what Tracey couldn't have foreseen is how the Internet would sweep in to provide an opportunity for public service broadcasters to become reborn as Public Service Media (PSM). The next director general of the BBC, Greg Dyke (2000-2004), reinvigorated the creative workforce of the corporation as he set out to 'cut the crap' and kick-off an ambitious programme for an expansive online presence together with a suite of additional television and digital radio services. Dyke resigned after the Hutton Report into the death of the scientist and biological weapons expert Dr. David Kelly (Starkey, 2009:49). Dyke's resignation

was followed by the appointment of Mark Thompson who to some extent built on Dyke's digital vision.

However, as Biltereyst (2004) argues, rather than fade away and become neutered as Tracey (1998) had feared, public broadcasters defended and repositioned themselves by following new articulations, updated understandings and renegotiated missions of public service broadcasting.

However following claims that the BBC was extending beyond the boundaries of broadcasting and building a formidable web presence, the BBC Trust called for the BBC's online presence to be reduced and more focused on core public service ideals.

Irish independent-commercial broadcasters' initial call for change

In 2002, the Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI) fired its first salvo in its attempt to level the playing field over what it perceived to be the unfair advantage that RTE had over the private sector (Buttle, 2002). During March of that year, the Irish government set up the Forum on Broadcasting (2002) to examine various aspects of Irish broadcasting among which was public service broadcasting.

The IBI suggested in its submission to the Forum, that PSB be 'defined in terms of broadcasting that is unprofitable but which has a high value to a limited section of the population' (Buttle, 2002:11). It also questioned the PSB role of RTE music station 2FM, suggesting that it was merely 'a commercial music-based station

carrying little that cannot be termed public service broadcasting' (ibid: 6). The IBI also advocated the setting up of a fund for programming with a public service value, a fund that could be drawn on by all broadcasters although it recognised that in practice the lion's share of such a fund would go to RTE, 'due to the expertise in this area' (ibid: 3).

Some years after it been first mooted by the IBI, the Minister with responsibility for broadcasting proposed that a programme fund be set up. Under Section 2 of the Broadcasting (Funding) Act, 2003, and operated under the supervision of the Broadcast Commission of Ireland (BCI), the *Sound & Vision* scheme came into being. Following examination by the European Commission, the *Sound & Vision* scheme was eventually green lighted in October 2005.¹⁷ The programme grant scheme began with five percent of the RTE TV license fee.¹⁸

PSB and the European Union

Coppins and Saeys (2006) looking at new approaches to oversee PSB, detail the administrative reforms at European level which sought to keep PSBs in check. In their study they review the approaches made by both RTE and commercial owners during the Forum on Broadcasting. The authors argue that by accepting the principle of the RTE Charter with the annual assessments, Ireland is 'fully in line with an evolution that is occurring throughout Europe, an evolution that the

¹⁷ Section 154(11) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 that this scheme continues under the operational responsibility of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) and is now known as *Sound and Vision II*.

¹⁸ Following the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the Broadcasting Fund receives 7% of the annual net receipts from the television licence fees.

European Union has helped shape' (ibid: 265). These charters or public service contracts are now becoming the norm and three elements appear common to all. The contract is usually three to five years; tasks are very tangible and these 'performance criteria' can be qualitative as well as quantitative; and the criteria can be imposed by the government or be self-imposed (ibid:268).

The authors conclude that no matter which way PSBs are assessed, 'clarity is indispensable if the broadcaster's performance is to be assessed seriously' and that it is ultimately up to society itself 'to define the fundamental social objective of PSB' (ibid:281).

PSB - forging a distinctive service

Tracey has argued that the aim of public service broadcasters has never been to maximise the audience but to guarantee diversity in the schedule with programmes made with an emphasis on quality that 'can please a lot of the people a lot of the time, and everybody some of the time' (Tracey, 1998:27). Public service broadcasting should be a driving force, and it is at its best when it manages 'to push the envelope' (Bardoel, d'Haenens, & Peeters, 2005:59). In 1993, when BBC Radio 1 was perceived by the then BBC Governors as being too commercially focused, Mathew Bannister the then controller of the youth-targeted service, set about remaking the station to enhance its credibility and lose its middle-aged image.

The BBC hoped that a new distinctive sound would set it apart from its commercial rivals. Over the following three years, its 20-million audience was reduced to 10-million and its popular and older presenters were unceremoniously sacked.

Mistakes were made with presenters who were hired and who didn't connect with the new mission. All the while, the commercial sector looked on with glee as the antics were played out in the popular tabloid press. Nevertheless, the management held its nerve and the result was a revised fit-for-purpose music station that championed new music and sparked the birth of Britpop exemplified by bands such as Oasis and Blur (Garfield, 1998; Hendy, 2000a). The Service Licence for Radio 1, issued by the BBC Trust states the remit of Radio 1 'is to entertain and engage a broad range of young listeners with distinctive mix of contemporary music and speech' ("BBC Trust: Service Licence - Radio 1," 2011). A recent review of station's audience revealed a slightly older average and the BBC is working to correct this with a new schedule.

The RTE Authority has never engaged in a public manner similar to the BBC about the remits of its analogue and digital radio stations.

Public Service Broadcasting, return to uncertainty

Public service broadcasting organisations have been scrutinised and suffered wavering government support almost since their inception. During the inflationary periods of the 1970s and early 1980s, the level of funding they received via the licence fee actually declined in real terms. The period from the mid-1990s to the

early-1980s saw public service broadcasters under attack from governments and from commercial competitors (Blumler, 1992). New technologies such as cable, satellite and over the last decade, the Internet, have resulted in a seismic shift in how PSBs have refocused and developed a new confidence (Scannell, 2010). However, while PSBs expanded into the online domain, an economic crash not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s, has placed public broadcasters into an unpredictable financial future with dwindling political support.

The collapse of the almost pan-European banking sectors and the resulting strain on public resources, compounded in Ireland's case with the meltdown in advertising revenue, has almost brought about a full circle return to the precarious years that Tracey described (Tracey, 1998). While the intervening years has seen a market-place now fully deregulated, the financial pressures on public service broadcasters – particularly in Ireland and the UK – has never been greater.

In 2010 the BBC was forced into accepting an early licence fee settlement by the new Conservative/Liberal Democrats coalition government. Firstly, the UK government wanted the BBC to pay for the licence fee for the over 75s at a projected annual cost of £550 million; when this was rejected by the BBC, it was suggested that the corporation would take advertising, a suggestion that was rejected by both the BBC and commercial operators as been a non-runner. So with its back to the wall over a weekend 'deal or no deal', the BBC was railroaded into accepting a freeze on its licence fee for six years along with taking over the

funding for the World Service (£272 million) from Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Welsh language television station S4C (£100 million). Already, 650 jobs have been lost in the World Service as several of its foreign-language stations were closed down.

The Corporation has unveiled its Delivering Quality First (DQF) programme of £670 million in cuts from television and radio budgets. This will result in no services being closed but 2,000 jobs are to be lost. The BBC director general, Mark Thompson has remarked that the corporation is at the 'end of the road' and that any further cuts would force it to close down a television or radio service (quoted in Sweeney, 2011). The impact on the future quality and range of the BBC's output as a result of having its licence fee income cut by 20% and new working practices introduced remains to be seen.

However, one media commentator has suggested that the digital expansion project begun by the director general, John Birt in the 1980s has come full circle.

It is now clear that, while people enjoyed the greater choice, digital multichannel TV brought, behaviour didn't change as fundamentally as had been imagined. As a result, some of the BBC's new digital channels tended to dilute the BBC's impact rather than reinforcing it' (Hewlett, 2011).

Hewlett argues that with the realignments of BBC 3 with BBC 1 and BBC 4 with BBC 2 reflecting what has already happening with Radio 7 becoming Radio 4 Extra and 6Music being tied to Radio 2 that ‘the corporation is refocusing on its most salient and potent brands’ (ibid).

RTE is arguably in a more precarious state than in any other period in its history. Noel Curran its present Director General wrote in *The Irish Times* that ‘the dual-funding model brings complications’ and that in terms of the sustainability of public service broadcasting ‘there is a tipping point approaching’ (Curran, 2011). RTE’s commercial income has witnessed the most extreme drop in Europe since the mid-Eighties; added to that the increased Programme Fund of 7 percent from its licence fee revenue and additional cost implications foisted on it in the last Budget has resulted in a projected deficit of €30 million for 2011.

Staff numbers at the station have already been cut by 200 since 2008 and are due to be cut again with a new round of voluntary redundancies set to further reduce the workforce from 2,900 during the boom period to around 1,750.¹⁹ Curran acknowledges that RTE’s ‘core mission of public service delivery needs to be refreshed and renewed, accentuating what we do differently’ (ibid). In March 2012, so great was the challenge of financing issues, that RTE Television decided to drop two popular afternoon television shows. Minister Pat Rabbitte TD has suggested a review of public broadcasting with perhaps a move to a universal

¹⁹ ‘RTE staff stunned as ‘second tier’ stars take a 30pc pay cut’ Irish Independent <http://www.independent.ie/business/media/rte-staff-stunned-as-second-tier-stars-take-a-30pc-pay-cut-3066452.html> 30th March 2012 [accessed 12/4/2012]

household charge to replace the licence fee. As Raboy pointed out in a report to UNESCO fifteen years ago - when he referred in particular to the Council of Europe's 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy (December, 1994) - PSBs are not in the main stymied by a lack of any good earnest objectives and ideas from EU policies and the like, but instead are constrained by a lack of proper political and economic support (Raboy, 1997). History is about to be repeated, although with more severe consequences.

Irish independent-commercial radio sector proposes far-reaching review

Just as public service stations across Europe and beyond have felt the effects of recession, commercial radio stations have seen their revenue streams contract sharply, perhaps they might argue, to a much greater extent than those of the public service broadcasting organisations. The Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI) who represent two national radio stations, one multicity radio station, four regional radio stations and 27 local radio station across Ireland, issued a call in 2012 for a major change in how public service is defined and funded.²⁰ The IBI is looking for government recognition that its members too, provide public service broadcasting. Moreover, it suggests that the licence fee funds should continue to be given to fund RTE and but any proposed Public Broadcasting Charge could be used to finance some existing and new PSB programming initiatives that its member stations do and potentially could provide. In addition, the IBI called for an amendment to the Broadcasting Act 2009, in particular to Section 108, which calls on RTE to 'be

²⁰ Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (2012) *Creating a fair broadcasting sector that serves the whole community* (Funding policy document, which was launched on 4th July 2012, Independence Day)

operated in an efficient manner so as to maximise revenues'. It further wants the Act to define and constrain the commercial mandate of RTE.

The current coalition government had included a commitment in its Programme for Government to review the funding of public and independent broadcasters.²¹ This has not yet happened and when asked in the Dail about these issues by Independent TD Brendan Griffin, the Minister made clear in his response that he thought that the stations had sought and accepted their licences on commercial terms and not withstanding the current economic recession, the problems will ease when advertising revenues recover. He also added:

In practical terms, EU State Aid rules provide a serious and unavoidable obstacle to the IBI proposal. The Principle of Additionally means that State funding can only be provided to companies where, in the absence of such funding, the service would not be delivered. The fact that the commercial broadcasters already provide a range of public service content voluntarily would clearly rule out the provision of any state funds on this basis.²²

It might be seen from this reply that the Labour partners in the coalition government would be against any new revenue - resulting from the proposed

²¹ (Source) in: *Towards Recovery: Programme for a National Government 2011-2016* (p.62). Online; www.labour.ie/download/pdf/labour_towards_recovery_report.pdf [accessed date: 23/12/2012]

²² Pat Rabbitte, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in reply to Paliamentary Questions Nos. 148, 149, 150, & 152 asked by Brendan Griffen TD, Written answer 11th July 2012,

Broadcasting Charge - going in any shape or form to private operators. Newstalk 106FM has recently aired promos ending with ‘not taking licence with the facts’, a reference both to the BAI inquiry which found RTE in serious breach and to the public money used to finance RTE.

Conclusion

2012 was to be a significant year in Ireland for broadcasting; it is a year in which RTE celebrated 50-years of television broadcasting. It turned out to be an *annus horribilis* for the organisation following the serious errors exposed in its much-trusted journalism. Just when RTE thought that it couldn’t get any worse, a possible review of the mechanism for funding public broadcasting in the near future could present further jeopardy to its funding base. It is to be expected that independent-commercial operators will make a strong case for a share of this new charge. It is estimated that a change from the TV Licence fee to a Public Broadcasting Charge would see an uplift of between €30-€40 million. This additional revenue is likely to be highly contested by both RTE and IBI. However, it is not just public and private broadcasters looking for any new revenue from a new funding model, the National Newspapers of Ireland (NNI) has since 2010, been seeking a ‘subsidy for newspapers to reflect the contributions that they make to the public good’ (plus, looking for the Minister to curb RTE’s online news and commercial activities.²³ It was shown that US public radio struggles hard for State support alongside the commercial giants of commercial radio. Both RTE and BBC

²³ National Newspapers of Ireland (2010). *Public Service Broadcasting and the Press; Ensuring fair competition in the Digital Age*. Submission to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 4th August 2010.

will remember 2012 for all the wrong reasons; it might also be a year that leaves public service broadcasters perhaps more focused on key principles.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The background to this study relates to the researcher's interest in exploring aspects of daily radio listening: namely, why are listeners attracted to radio in general and in particular, to the public service broadcaster RTE Radio 1 (the national station that carries a full-service schedule). Central to this study is the notion and understanding – *from the listeners' perspective* – of public service broadcasting. This study sets out to understand how such views and experiences have shaped listeners' habits. It is therefore worthwhile and may contribute to the knowledge, particularly in the context of the Irish radio experience.

A substantial qualitative data collection described below took place in August-September 2005, with a further wave of data collected seven years later in October-November 2012. The purpose of collecting data at two points in time was to examine and compare how some key listeners' opinions did, or did, not change with the passage of time.

Context

The first wave of qualitative data collection was conducted two years before the collapse of the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ and the general economic financial crash and the austerity measures that were later bestowed on country. It was also conducted about a year before a very public debate on the RTE presenter’s salaries kicked off.²⁴ Also, two major breaches of the otherwise good standards and unblemished record of RTE’s journalism occurred over the last twelve months (2011-2012). The first was the successful libel/defamation suit against the *Primetime Investigates* programme *Mission to Prey* after which the government initiated an independent inquiry into the circumstances of RTE’s defamation of Fr Kevin Reynolds. The second was the so-called ‘twittergate’ controversy surrounding the *Frontline* debate with the Presidential candidates during which an unchecked tweet purporting to be from the Sinn Fein party was unwittingly read out by the host Pat Kenny. It was claimed afterwards that this on-air gaffe resulted in a large swing of support away from Sean Gallagher the then front-runner in the election campaign. In any event, Gallagher lodged a complaint to the BAI, which was later upheld. From this period on, RTE has suffered some degree of reputational damage and has been brought before the Oireachtas All Party Committee to answer these concerns.²⁵

Also occurring just after the main 2005 qualitative data collection, former Dublin station NewsTalk was successful in the competition for the new ‘quasi’ national

²⁴ ‘Pat Kenny has a million reasons for loving his job’ in The Irish Independent 29.6.2006 <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/pat-kenny-has-a-million-reasons-for-loving-his-job-95300.html> [accessed 1.12.2010]

²⁵ ‘TDs on their own mission to give RTE a grilling’ in The Irish Times 17 May 2012 <http://0-www.irishtimes.com.ditlib.dit.ie/newspaper/ireland/2012/0517/1224316240865.html> [accessed 19 May 2012]

licence. It has taken a number of years for NewsTalk 106 FM to gain a threshold market share and so it was worthwhile to see if that station had any market impact with the audience in the subsequent 'revisit' in 2012; It was therefore necessary to compile a tighter second wave of data that would be useful in comparing key opinions expressed in 2005 with fresh statements in late 2012. Also occurring in 2012, the independent-commercial radio sector launched a campaign to look for public funding for the provision of public service broadcasting. This was a new and significant challenge to RTE and so worthwhile taking into account when discussing the financing of public service broadcasting, going forward. Finally, it was important to gauge whether or not the unprecedented events surrounding the global financial crash and some of the events described above had any bearing on views specifically in relation to the public funding model for RTE and perceptions on the operation public service broadcasting by RTE Radio.

Therefore, this research aspires to present a unique perception from listeners to Irish public radio. While the quantitative inquiry extends to survey a late audience data set, with aims to provide a complete 'picture' of how the listenership landscape has transformed over a time frame; a large qualitative inquiry is conducted mid-cycle to get a very detailed view of the behaviour and listening habits of twenty-one listeners; this is then followed-up seven years after to get fresh audience opinions and to re-examine important core opinions and perceptions in 2012 against earlier ones to see how they compare.

Research Objectives

Below are the key research objectives that this research project sets out to answer.

1. To identify the reasons why RTE Radio 1 attracts and engages listeners and to evaluate critically the literature surrounding some key debates in public service broadcasting and points of interest in the evolution and development of RTE Radio 1.
2. To explore key issues surrounding the audiences' perceptions and understandings of RTE Radio 1 and public service broadcasting in particular and to examine at the role of the presenter and consider in-depth aspects of presentation and personality.
3. To explore the early experiences of users and the socialisation of radio as a medium and to establish if early listening references and impressions have any link to an individual's current listening pattern.
4. To see how some key opinions and perception compare and contrast with earlier expressions following a period of seven years.

Research strategy

A strategy for this research project was decided upon when considering how best to answer the key research objectives. Thus it would be necessary to employ a strategy that would underpin this inquiry to best achieve the above aims. For an organisation or individual programme, a case study approach might seem appropriate. A large-

scale survey was ruled out as it would be less able to reveal the everyday, ordinary and unexplored domain outlined in the research objectives. A survey might however, prove most useful in following up on any refined results from this study (Fowler, 2001). Ethnography would be useful in studying the culture and methods of operation and production of an organisation. A good example of this approach was the study of television production is Silverstone's (1985) study of the making of BBC's *Horizon*. Another recent example concerns Brennan's (2011) study locating behind-the-scenes humour during the production of an RTE television soap opera.

The strategy for this research project included: in-depth interviewing as a method for qualitative data collection; also employing qualitative analysis and additional methods adapted from Grounded Theory as a method for data analysis. Saunders et al, stress the importance of justifying the relevance of your chosen research strategy to the work under study: 'what matters is not the label that is attached to a particular strategy, but whether it is appropriate for your particular research' (2000:92) . This study therefore is one using mixed methods.

Quantitative and Qualitative approaches

This project utilises both quantitative and qualitative methods. For the initial stages of this research, I embarked on a study of secondary analysis of a large data set of quantitative data in the form of radio listenership figures. This largely exploratory inquiry was undertaken to try to ascertain what (stations) and to what (presenter/programme) the adult population was listening to, along with emerging

trends, to or away, from the public broadcaster, RTE Radio 1 and to a lesser extent its stable mate, music station 2FM.

Dublin area

This quantitative study centred on County Dublin (broadcast franchise area as defined by the Broadcast Commission of Ireland). For this, I carried out a secondary analysis of a large data set. The original data was researched and compiled by the Joint National Listenership Research (JNLR) for radio listening to radio on a daily and weekly basis.²⁶ It is worth mentioning that the objective of the JNLR survey is ‘to provide reliable estimates of audiences to both National and Local Radio, as a basis for the planning of advertising schedules’.²⁷

Radio listenership terms – ‘Share’ and ‘Reach’

Two main terms are used in the analysis of radio audience listening figures, Market Share and Reach.

‘Market Share’ is concerned with the actual audience that listens to one or more stations - the actual proportion of a market accounted for by a particular service. It is calculated by adding up the amount of time spent listening to the different stations and expressing figures for each station as a percentage of all listening. For commercial stations, market share is regarded as being the most important measurement of audience data ahead of ‘Reach’, as the ‘Share’ figure reflects the depth and loyalty to each station.

²⁶ The JNLR survey is now carried out by TNS/MRBI.

²⁷ JNLR/MRBI, Weekdays 1998/9, p4.

‘Reach’ refers to the penetration of radio into the universal population at large. The measure is used to refer to the percentage of the population who listened to at least some of a programme or station during a day or week. For example, ‘Reach’ for ‘Any Radio’ in 2011/3 stood at 84 percent.²⁸ That is 84 percent of the entire population above 15-years-of-age listened to some radio during the day. Conversely, this means that the remaining 16 percent *didn’t listen* to any radio at all. The ‘Reach’ referred to below is for daily reach or ‘Yesterday Listenership’.

Secondary analysis of large data set

Together with the general audience, I chose in particular to analyse two specific audience demographics: those listeners (and non-listeners) in the 25-34-year-old audience demographic and the 35-44-year-old audience demographic. Both of these groupings cover the ‘sweet’ spot that frames the RTE 2FM and RTE Radio 1 audience. It is the most contested and it is from these segments that both stations seek ‘replenishers’ to recruit and refresh their respective audience bases from. From the JNLR’s data, I researched and compiled the following data in relation to the National and County Dublin listening areas:

- A. ‘All Adult’ Dublin Market Share Weekdays trends over the years from 1994 up to 2005 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.

²⁸ (source: JNLR /Ipos/MRBI 2011/3)

- B. 'All Adult' Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays covering the years 1994 – 2005
- C. 'All Adult' Dublin listenership across the day (2001)
- D. 'All Adult' Dublin listenership across the day (2001 compared with 2008)
- E. 45-54-year-olds National Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays (2006 compared with 2011).
- F. 45-54-year-olds National Share Weekdays (2006 compared with 2011).
- G. 'All Adult' National Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays (2006 compared with 2011).
- H. 'All Adult' National Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays (2006 compared with 2010).
- H. 'All Adult' 'Any Local/Regional/Multi-city (year-by-year) 1991 – 2010Q2.
- I. 15-34-year-olds 'Any Local/Regional/Multi-city (year-by-year) 1991 – 2010Q2.
- J. 15-34-year-olds National Average minutes listening year-by-year 1993 – 2010Q2.
- K. 15-34-year-olds National Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays year-by-year 1991 – 2011Q2.

Focus on two specific audience demographic sub sets

I also looked at two specific demographic sub sets:

- (1) 25-34- year-olds.
- (2) 35-44-year-olds.

In these sub demographic profiles I examined the following data in relation to the County Dublin listening and national listening:

Secondary analysis on the 25-34-year-old listening demographic:

- A. 25-34- year-olds Dublin Reach ‘yesterday listenership’ from the years 1994 – 2003.
- B. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Market Share trends covering the years from 1994 up to 2003 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.
- C. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Monday – Friday ‘quarter hour listenership’ (period 1998/99).
- D. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Reach (‘yesterday listenership’) Weekday covering the period 1995, 2000, 2006 & 2010.
- E. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Saturday - ‘quarter hour listenership’ (period 1998/99).
- F. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Sunday - ‘quarter hour listenership’ (period 1998/99).
- G. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Market Share (Saturday) covering the period 1994 up to 1999/00 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.

- H. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Saturdays covering the period 1994 up to 1999/00.
- I. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Sundays covering the period 1994 up to 1999/00.
- J. 25-34-year-olds Dublin Market Share (Sundays) covering the period 1994 up to 1999/00 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.
- K. 25-34-year-olds National Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekdays (2006 compared with 2011).

Secondary analysis on the 35-44-year-olds listening demographic:

- A. 35-44-year-olds National Reach ('yesterday listenership') comparison between 2006 and 2010.
- B. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekday covering the period 1994 up to 2008.
- C. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Weekday covering the period 1995, 2000, 2006 & 2010.
- D. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Market Share (Weekday) covering the period 1994 up to 2001 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.
- E. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Saturday covering the period 1994 up to 2003.

- F. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Reach ('yesterday listenership') Sunday covering the period 1994 up to 2003.
- G. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Market Share (Saturday) covering the period 1994 up to 2003 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.
- H. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Market Share (Sunday) covering the period 1994 up to 2003 in two day parts: from 0700hrs – 1900hrs and from 1900hrs – 0000hrs.
- I. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Saturday 'quarter hour listenership' (period 1998/99).
- J. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Sunday 'quarter hour listenership' (period 1998/99).
- K. 35-44-year-olds Dublin Monday – Friday 'quarter hour listenership' (period 1998/99).
- L. 35-44-year-olds National Reach 'yesterday listenership' Weekdays 2006 compared to 2011.
- M. 35-44-year-olds National Reach 'yesterday listenership' Weekdays 2006 compared to 2010.
- N. 35-44-year-olds National Share (7am-7pm) 'yesterday listenership' Weekdays 2006 compared to 2011.

The data I was analysing was contained in weighty soft back books, which were published bi-annually (January and July) by the JNLR.²⁹ As the data is only available to subscribers (radio stations etc.) in electronic form, I manually transferred the figures to my own spreadsheets to compile and make my own comparisons. This data is presented in chapter four ‘The listening audience – context and change’. While this chapter is presented as one the shortest of the thesis, the compilation and analysis of the data proved to be one of the longest periods of work. It also underpins the study with an interesting context and ‘story’ to the dilemmas and issues that are under inquiry with the qualitative research.

Answering the ‘why?’ questions

From this retrieved data, I compiled Bar, Column, Line and Pie charts to highlight audience listening trends. The falls and gains were, in effect, shifting sands beneath the top-line figures. I had initially thought that the study would be a 50:50 balance between quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, from the quantitative study with the ‘figures’ it became clear that the most substantial part of this project would focus on the ‘why?’ questions, which would be more substantially answered with a qualitative approach – namely, in-depth interviewing of a reasonable sample-size appropriate for a project of this level. Bryman (2004:462) suggests that the use of a qualitative or quantitative approach is down to what questions are to be answered and relies on ‘how best to interweave the different elements’.

²⁹ It is now available online to subscriber stations and is published quarterly.

The quantitative analysis gave me a more focused understanding of what my qualitative framework would have to be about. It strengthened my belief that a qualitative aspect would be necessary to add depth and insight. As Marshall and Rossman (2010:2) state: ‘qualitative researchers tend to view social worlds as holistic and complex’

By utilising the correct balance of both approaches in my mixed methods approach, I believed that this would provide me with the fine focus necessary to inquire into my research project and achieve my research objects.

Sampling

This project used ‘self-selected’ or ‘convenience’ sampling. While it was appropriate for a study of this size and nature, caution must be given to any claims that it is representative.

To solicit participants for the interview schedule, an email was sent out via the DIT Public Affairs Office across the DIT to all full-time and part-time staff. The text of the interview read as follows:

Do you listen to radio? A DIT researcher is looking to talk to individuals who are radio listeners and who would be willing to discuss their listening habits, their perceptions concerning radio listening in general and, in particular, aspects of RTE Radio 1. What do you like about the programmes and presenters that you hear?

Can you remember when you first heard radio? What were your earliest experiences listening to radio?

My phone number and email was attached and within hours I had quite a few responses. I gave more context to the callers and explained that the interviews would be recorded and would last about forty-minutes and would be conducted at a time and a location suitable to them. I further explained about the focus of the research. I prompted that I would be interested in their first associations with the medium and early programmes. This would enable potential participants to ‘think back’ in advance of my meeting with them.

Caution against potential bias in favour of RTE

It should be noted that all the respondents are employees of The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and it might be assumed that such respondents could harbour some ‘pro’ public service views and perhaps not be capable of having objective views on a semi state organisation such as RTE. However, after collecting the data, any doubts that the researcher may have held on this front were allayed by the reading back the perceptive objective opinions and comments. It might also be noted that the respondents are all ‘well-educated’ and might therefore represent only one particular fraction of the actual listening audience. Yet, public speech and information radio tends in its appeal to be more skewed towards an ABC1 audience; this is so in the UK, the US and in Ireland. Therefore, on the contrary, it could also be argued that the

potential interviewees are in fact more typical of the public radio listener. Only a larger representative sample could correct this potential bias.

To remove any potential conflict of interest – from my participants or indeed myself - I politely declined any respondents from my colleagues in my own School or Department.

The interviewees were, in effect ‘self-selected’ and largely unknown to me.

Interview schedule

Table 3.0 Interview schedule listing Age, Gender, Name, Occupation, Demographic age group.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE						
	Age	Sex	First Name	Occupation	Name, occupation and age grouping	Demograph
↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
1	26	M	Ian	Computer Programmer	(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)	25-34
2	28	M	Conor	Computer Technician	(Conor, computer technician, 25-34)	25-34
3	30	F	Natasha	IT Manager	(Natasha, IT manager, 25-34)	25-34
4	32	F	Paula	Office manager	(Paula, office manager, 25-34)	25-34
5	34	M	Bill	web designer	(Bill, project manager, 25-34)	25-34
6	34	F	Caroline	Lectuer	(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)	25-34
7	35	F	Lisa	PhD student	(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)	35-44
8	37	F	Susan	Lecturer	(Susan, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44
9	38	F	Ashley	Manager	(Ashley, manager, 35-44)	35-44
10	38	M	Barry	Economist	(Barry, economist, 35-44)	35-44
11	39	F	Laura	Lecturer	(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44
12	40	F	Amanda	Lectuer	(Amanda, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44
14	42	F	Sophie	Adminstrator	(Sophie, administrator, 35-44)	35-44
15	42	M	Andrew	Research Manager	(Andrew, Head of Research, 35-44)	35-44
13	45	M	Paul	Lectuer	(Paul, lecturer, 45-54)	45-54
16	49	M	Fergal	Technian	(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)	45-54
17	55	M	John	Engineer	(John, engineer, 45-54)	45-54
18	57	F	Mary	Lectuer	(Mary, librarian, 55-64)	55-64
19	57	M	Brian	HR manager	(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)	55-64
20	59	F	Sarah	Lecturer	(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)	55-64
21	60	F	Claire	Secretary	(Claire, secretary, 55-64)	55-64

Table 3.0 Interview schedule (sorted ‘age ascending ‘)

Table 3.0 Shows that ($N = 21$) 21 participants were selected. The ages of the 21 individuals ranged from 26-years-old up to the most senior who was 60-years-old. The average age was ‘42’. Real first names were changed to pseudonyms (see below). The gender breakdown is Male $N = 9$ and Female $N = 12$. The participants’ main credential is experiential relevance.

The participants’ occupations are listed in column five and in the adjoining column a colour code is used to reflect the different demographic profile that each respective participant resides. These categories correspond exactly to the age grouping used in audience research such as the JNLR (Joint National Listenership Research). Eight participants, or just over one third of the interview schedule, fall into the 35-44-year-

old demographic category. These are often referred to as ‘replenishers’. This term refers to those who may have an interest in speech radio, but tend to be slightly younger and lighter listeners than that of the RTE Radio1 core audience and are therefore important to the regeneration of RTE Radio 1.

In addition to the above listeners chosen for my interview schedule, I also interviewed Mr Adrian Moynes, managing director of Radio at RTE and Ms Eithne Hand, Head of RTE Radio 1. These interviews were conducted after I had completed my listener participants’ interviews and the interviews with these RTE executives largely focused on programming strategy and public service broadcasting policy.

In-depth, semi-structured interviewing

The purpose of the interview is similar to other forms of qualitative research, that is to *reveal* or *understand* ‘rather than to measure or describe’(Mytton, 1999:105; Silverman, 1993:113). They attempt to delve deep, to go beyond the surface. To go into something ‘in depth’ is to ‘get more detailed knowledge of it’ (Wengraf, 2001:6). As Byrne observes:

Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered

response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events and understandings, experiences and opinions...'(Byrne, 2004:182)

Radio listening is individualistic by its very nature and so one-to-one interviews are an excellent way to allow an individual to express a perception or opinion without being judged by others, in say, a focus group. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed for some probing with the participant's answers as I was conscious of the aims of the project whereas with a structured interview, that flexibility would be lost (Silverman, 1993:110)

Contributor relationships are key to a good interview. 'The manner and tone of voice, even the 'body language' or posture of the interviewer can have a big influence' (Mytton, 1999:57). In order to have the right atmosphere, the interviewer must be relaxed, confident in approach and have the ability to generate a structured 'conversation' that will enable the participant to converse in an open and honest manner. The qualitative interview is a developed and focused conversation with the interviewer directing and steering the questioning (Babbie, 2007). The location should be appropriate in size to enable an intimate conversation to be had, free from distractions. In setting up my interview schedule, I was anxious to pick a time that best suited the interviewee so that he/she would not feel rushed or under pressure of time. I jettisoned one particular interview because I felt that the disruptions that had occurred (people coming and going into the office) caused the participant to feel

awkward and conscious of her answers. A reading of the transcription revealed the artificial nature of the interview.

After the interviews had concluded the participants were asked if they were happy with the interview and were afforded an opportunity to add or clarify something. An email was sent to express my gratitude for the giving of the interviewees' precious time to this project.

Schedule of questions

To help focusing the interviews and with reference to my research objectives, the questions were formulated about key themes and the interview broken down in to twelve parts (see below). The themes reflect the aims and objects of this research project and represent some of the primary areas of focus of research arising from the literature. While the schedule is structured, the researcher needs to be alert and flexible to explore answers, seek clarification or elaboration. It is important to remain objective throughout the interview process and not give any impression that the researcher is expecting the interviewee to be 'pro' or 'anti' an organisation, issue or policy. Others questions were included and put to the participants about music preferences for example and the answers provided proved fascinating. However, space and key objectives have ruled out any great degree of emphasis or analysis on music and memory.

The schedule of questions into twelve constituent sections

Table 3.1 Interview schedule of themes for first wave of data collection.

1 Radio memories:

1.1 Earliest memory of listening to the radio?

*1.2 Can you remember what programmes your
parents listened to?*

1.3 Teenager – what did you listen to?

1.4 What were some of your favourite songs

*1.5 What you listened to when younger - does it have
any bearing on now?*

1.6 What would you regard as 'oldies'?

1.7 DJ's back then – were they different?

*1.8 RTE presenters (then and now) is their approach
the same?*

*1.9 How do presenters choose the music that they
play?*

2 Dublin radio stations:

*2.1 Music format – preference for back-to-back or
single play?*

3. Radio use:

3.1 What do you turn the radio on for? Answers

combined with 3.2

3.2 What would you miss most about it?

3.3 Best presenters and why?

3.3.1 Women presenters

3.4 Do you listen at night?

3.5 Presets in the car?

4. RTE Radio:

4.1 Attraction (if any) RTE holds over competition

4.2 RTE licence fee – is it fair?

4.3 Should RTE produce programmes differently to others

4.4 In Dublin, which station provides the most competition to RTE?

4.5 Which stations are the most popular in Dublin?

4.6 What does the phrase 'Public Service Broadcasting' mean to you?

4.7 What to you is the difference between 2FM and Today FM?

5. Other stations:

- 5.1 *What's your opinion on Today FM?*
- 5.2 *General opinion on Dublin stations?*
- 5.3 *Do you ever listen to any BBC radio stations?*

6. *Funding:*

- 6.1 *Do you think non-RTE stations should be allocated funding if...?*

7. *Future:*

- 7.1 *What will radio sound like in ten years' time?*
- 7.2 *Do you ever listen to radio via Internet or TV?*
- 7.3 *Do you listen to more or less radio now than before?*

8. *Return to music and memories:*

- 8.1 *Do songs bring you back to different times?*
- 8.2 *Can you remember where you were when you heard it?*
- 8.3 *What song(s) do you associate with summer?*

9. *Radio listening choice:*

- 9.1 *Is there any type of radio station missing from the airwaves?*
- 9.2 *What types of programmes would you like to hear more of on RTE?*

- 9.3 *Dublin stations compared to other locals outside Dublin?*
- 10. *Return to PSB:*
 - 10.1 *RTE's PSB obligations...Does RTE provide this?*
 - 10.2 *Opinion on being popular versus risk taking*
- 11. *New 'quasi' national commercial licence*
 - 11.1 *Opinion/thoughts on what type of service?*
- 12 *Radio*
 - 12.1 *What do you dislike or hate most about radio?*
 - 12.2 *Do you listen to music on MP3/iPod/etc other than radio?*

The framework for the colour coding

Each and every question was transcribed. In the Above Table 3.1 shows that all questions that appear in blue ink were analysed for the purposes of this project. However, due to the scope of inquiry and focus of this research, not all such questions were included in the Qualitative Research Findings and Discussion chapter. Questions that are highlighted in yellow were included for analysis within Qualitative Research. The data collected but excluded from this research may be useful in a further expanded study.

New wave of data collection to examine if key opinions had changed over time

As mentioned above, a lot had occurred in the intervening years between original qualitative data collection in the years between late-2005 and late-2012. How would listeners perceive public service broadcasting in the midst of a major recession?

Would they have different views on the funding model for RTE and would they support any moves to top-slice and share the Television Licence Fee? What would they think the BAI's Broadcast Funding Scheme (Sound & Vision II)? Would they have any awareness of the S&V scheme, which had just started to be rolled out shortly after the initial first wave of data collection? It would also be opportune to see if, and how, their individual listening patterns had altered or had been in any way affected by the overarching recession, which had reduced their incomes and perhaps depressed their mood? Moreover, what impact, if any, had the new commercial quasi-national NewsTalk 106 FM made on listening patterns?

To this end, a number of 'open' questions were formulated to focus on core public service broadcasting issues; perception of public service broadcasting in 2012 and views on the TV Licence funding model for RTE and market impact of Newstalk and any general change to listening patterns. Below is a table with the questions asked in the new wave of data collection.

Table 3.2 New schedule of questions for second wave of data collection in 2012 to ascertain any change in opinions or perception from 2005

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After a very thorough inspection of the complete schedule of questions for the first data collection, the researcher decided that three or four focused open questions would be appropriate to gather an up-to-date point of view on important matters for this research project. Four specific areas were ‘revisited’ - Operation of public service broadcasting; Funding model for RTE; and market impact of national commercial competitor.

(A) Understanding of PSB concept and its complexities in 2012

Q 1. What’s your perception of Public Service Broadcasting now, in 2012, as RTE Radio operates it?

(B) Funding model and fairness 2012

Q 2. How, in your opinion, should RTE be funded? Is the licence fee still the best or fairest way?

Follow-up question (in case they probably don’t mention it?)

Q 2a. RTE’s licence fee is ‘top sliced’ by 7% for the BAI Sound & Vision scheme and that amount, 7%, is then used for a broadcast programme fund from which RTE and other stations can apply for to make programmes. What ‘s your opinion on this?

(C) Sharing the licence fee with other stations 2012

Q 3. What do you think about sharing the licence fee among other stations as well as RTE?

(D) The quantitative analysis had revealed that NewsTalk 106FM made a slow but impressive inroad with regard to the two specific demographics, the potential and actual ‘replenishers’, which formed a major focus of this study

Q 4. Has your listening pattern changed since we spoke in 2005? (And, if not mentioned in the answer, ‘Do you ever listen to NewsTalk?’)

Table 3.3 Interview schedule for key questions re-examined

A	H	K	L	M	N	O	
	Name, occupation and age grouping	Demograph	2005: RTE is part funded by the licence fee. Do you think this is fair?	2012: Q2 Opinion on RTE's funding model in 2012. Is the Licence fee still the best way?	2012: Q2a awareness of S&V Scheme?	2012: Q3 What do you think about sharing the licence fee with other non-RTE stations?	2012: Has 'listener pattern' changed?
1	(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)	25-34	no	Qual yes	No	shared enough	yes
2	(Conor, computer technician, 25-34)	25-34	no	Qual yes	No	shared more	yes
3	(Natasha, IT manager, 25-34)	25-34	yes	Qual yes	No	No	yes
4	(Paula, office manager, 25-34)	25-34	no	Qual yes	No	shared more	yes
6	(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)	25-34	yes	Yes	No	No	yes
5	(Bill, project manager, 25-34) - USA	25-34	yes				
7	(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)	35-44	unsure		No	No	yes
8	(Susan, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44		No		shared more	
9	(Ashley, manager, 35-44)	35-44	Qno	Qual yes	No		yes
10	(Barry, economist, 35-44)	35-44	Qyes	Yes	Might have?	No	Yes
11	(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44	unsure	Yes	No	No	Yes
12	(Amanda, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44		Yes	No		Yes
14	(Sophie, administrator, 35-44) - unknown	35-44					
15	(Andrew, Head of Research, 35-44)	35-44		Qual yes	No	No	Yes
13	(Paul, lecturer, 45-54) - no response	45-54	yes				yes
14	(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)	45-54	no	Yes	No	No	yes
17	(John, engineer, 45-54)	45-54	Qyes	Yes		No	no
18	(Mary, librarian, 55-64) - retired	55-64	Qyes				
19	(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)	55-64	Qyes	Yes	No	No	yes
20	(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64) - retired	55-64	yes				
21	(Claire, secretary, 55-64) - retired	55-64	yes				

Table 3.3 shows those who were interviewed for the second wave of data collection in November 2012. Names in 'blue' are those who were interviewed. Three of the original panel had retired and one had emigrated to the USA. The new wave of data did manage to 'capture' all but two respondents from the two of the targeted demographics that formed a focus in the quantitative analysis. Both these demographics represent the highly prized 'replenishers' to RTE Radio 1 and 2FM.

The above table also give some information on views expressed in 2005, which can be compared with answers given in 2012. These answers are discussed in detail in the ‘Qualitative research findings and discussion’ chapter.

Recording of interviews

Interviews were recorded on minidisc using a HHB Port disc MD500 with a Beyer dynamic MCE82 stereo microphone. The intention was to capture rich naturalistic sound suitable so that the material would be useful for the making of a broadcast programme. This was done more out of habit than desire. The position of the recorder and microphone was positioned such, so as to keep the actual recording device and microphone from impinging on the naturalistic setting and atmosphere.

Location of recordings

Recordings were carried out on location in the individual participant’s office or similar locations. Participants were asked for their consent to record the interviews before the interview began. They were told *afterwards* that it would be used solely for the purposes of transcription and that they would be contacted for their permission should any further use be proposed in respect of the recording for a radio programme etc. Participants were guaranteed that their individual identities would be anonymised but that their actual ages and job titles would be included. Pleasantries were exchanged and individuals were put at ease before the interviews commenced.

Transcription

Interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the event. This was a long and necessary process and each transcript ranged from between thirty and thirty-eight pages in length and averaged 8,000 words per interviewee. As Corbin (1990:31) points out: 'better more than less'.

I found the very first listen back of the recordings to be perhaps the most important; it was then that I got a very good theoretical sense of; (1) each interview and (2) what Wengraf (2001:209) refers to as a 'holistic sense of the whole'.

Emerging themes

Having transcribed and sorted the individual interviews it was then time to read and reread the transcriptions, to get a feel for the whole (Cresswell, 1998:133). This iterative process of *description*, *analysis* and *interpretation* (Wolcott, 2001) is not a linear activity but helps capturing themes and patterns – both hidden and evident – in the data (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also loaded the audio interviews on to my iPod and listened as I walked late at night. I felt confident that I had reached saturation point with what I had recorded and transcribed and that 'more interviews would not add any new insights of perspectives' (Flick, 2007:81).

I contacted the participants and asked if they would like a copy of the transcripts to peruse the transcription to see if they wanted to correct anything or wish to exclude answers or comment. Only three participants requested a copy and none asked for amendments.

In the transcriptions, some questions appear blank, whereas, in reality, a participant might have comfortably drifted across topics during an answer. For example, when one participant was recalling her teenage listening habits, she went on to discuss material associated with a previous question. Or another, for example, might have started to discuss a topic yet to come.

Grounded Theory – a framework for data analysis

After all the interviews were transcribed, I began to break down the interview data into easily identified themed subsets. It was from the interviews that the theory began to emerge. I used notes to myself known as ‘memoing’ to help me document what my impressions were of the rich and dense data under scrutiny. As Glaser, (1978:83) states; ‘Memo-writing constantly captures the “frontier of the analyst’s thinking” as he goes through his data, codes, sorts or writes’.

Table 3.4 An example of Grounded Theory style of ‘memoing’.

		Interview with Paul (45)
	Can you remember your first time listening to Radio?	
	<p><u>Listening</u> with Dad</p> <p><u>Recalling</u> programme strap line</p> <p>[Mixing up sponsor programmes Leo Murphy with the Waltons' programme]</p> <p>Radio <u>being</u> on while family ate.</p>	<p>Yeah Tommy O'Brien programme RTE, lunchtimes, it was lunchtimes on a Saturday, I would have been say, my dad listened to the radio and it would have been on, well it might have been Saturday and Sunday and it would have been yeah Tommy O'Brien.</p> <p>It was a musical programme. If you do feel like singing, do sing an Irish song and all this sort of stuff, you know.</p> <p>Well Tommy O'Brien would have been on in the house, that's why I</p>

		<p>remember it during lunchtimes cause radio was on while we were eating.</p> <p>It could be yeah. It's the old Irish singing, John McCormack's music and all the rest of it.</p> <p>Maybe I'm wrong, maybe it is Peter O'Brien. That's the one, I remember that.</p>
	<p><u>Confusing</u> programmes</p>	
	<p><u>Recalling</u> age: Five or six</p>	
	<p>Radio Luxembourg was around</p>	<p>Maybe five or six, like you know what I mean, it's way, way back.</p>
	<p><u>Getting</u> into music around 12 or 13</p>	<p>Luxembourg I suppose would have been around, I'm getting into that music maybe about twelve or thirteen and it would have been around that stage. I can't remember when I would have stopped listening</p>
	<p><u>Stopping</u> listening at around 16.</p>	

	<p><u>Getting</u> into rock music</p> <p>then.</p> <p><u>Associating</u> radio with pop</p> <p><u>Confusing</u> programmes</p>	<p>to it but I suppose</p> <p>I would have stopped listening to it when I was about sixteen, thereabout I would have stopped listening to those channels and more into rock music rather than the pop stuff that was on the radios.</p> <p>Oh God it would have been in those days Caroline and BBC Radio 2, the music channel would have been, it was 2 yeah and that would have been it at that time.</p> <p>Luxembourg yeah, it would have been Luxembourg as well.</p>
--	--	--

Table 3.4 Example of memoing to one question (1.0)

Table 3.2 shows Paul's answer to question 1.0 on his earliest memory of listening to radio. The transcribed answer is in the right-hand column and my notes on the left are attempting to describe or condense meaning. This type of 'memoing' was carried out for the answers to individual questions.

Later I gathered together all the answers under the various themes that were directly related to the interview schedule questions. In the Appendix, examples are included with highlighted text indicating which parts of the interviewee's answers were used as respondents' quotes in the Qualitative Research Findings and Discussion chapter. In the Qualitative Research Findings and Discussion chapter, one or two questions appear to be analysed out of sequence; this was done to aid the flow of analysis.

When writing up the results, these rely in the main on text however, one of two charts are used to aid comprehension and analysis. For example, Miles and Huberman (1994), suggest that the use of a wide variety of displays, greatly facilitates the analysis of qualitative data. I extended the range across the Excel sheet. For example,

in Table 3.3 below, I demonstrate how Excel is used to aid the in-depth inquiry that takes place using a qualitative approach.

Using Excel to assist in qualitative inquiry

Table 3.5 Example of Excel sheet to aid provision of data.

Name, occupation and age grouping	Demograph	4.2	10.1	4.3	6.1
		RTE is part funded by the licence fee. Do you think this is fair?	RTE's PSB obligations ...Does RTE provide this?	Should RTE produce progs differently in comparison to what others do	What do you think if the other non-RTE stations were to be given or were allocated funding
1 (Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)	25-34				distribute it
2 (Conor, computer technician, 25-34)	25-34	no		they are	distribute it
3 (Natasha, IT manager 25-34)	25-34	yes	Qyes	they are	mixed
4 (Paula, office manager, 25-34)	25-34	no			open
6 (Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)	25-34	yes	questions	losing distincti	would duplicat
5 (Bill, project manager, 25-34)	25-34	yes		they are	open
7 (Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)	35-44	unsure		they are	mkt too small
8 (Susan, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44				
9 (Ashley, manager, 35-44)	35-44	Qno		could be bette	open
10 (Barry, economist, 35-44)	35-44	Qyes		should	open
11 (Laura, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44	unsure			
12 (Amanda, lecturer, 35-44)	35-44				
14 (Sophie, administrator, 35-44)	35-44		try harder		would dilute
15 (Andrew, Head of Research, 35-44)	35-44				open
13 (Paul, lecturer, 45-54)	45-54	yes	digital option in future		open but
16 (Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)	45-54	no			open
17 (John, engineer, 45-54)	45-54	Qyes		they are	
18 (Mary, librarian, 55-64)	55-64	Qyes	yes		limit to R1
19 (Brian, HR manager, 55-65)	55-64	Qyes		they are	open
20 (Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)	55-64	yes			
21 (Claire, secretary, 55-64)	55-64	yes	all things to..		open

Table 3.5 shows the list of interviewees and how Excel was of use in quantifying some of the answers. For example, question 4.2 lists the ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘unsure’ responses to the question “*RTE is part-funded by the licence fee. Do you think this is fair?*”

Conclusion

In the above chapter, the research strategy and chosen methods of analysis were presented. The in-depth interviews were conducted in late-summer 2005 and reasons explaining this were discussed. The following two chapters will attempt to present the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter 4 ‘The listening audience – context and change’ is an attempt to get behind the listening figures and illustrate the underlying trends to the listening landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LISTENING AUDIENCE – CONTEXT AND CHANGE

Introduction

This chapter presents the audience context to this study by providing summary information in graphical form in relation to the makeup of the audience. Charts are presented that identify underlying trends and issues. This compilation of this data represents a large portion of the time devoted to this study. The figures present audience profiles in a comparative context between different points in time. It was noted that the main audience under examination in this study is the Dublin audience. However both National and Dublin audience figures are analysed and discussed. The research covers periods from 2000 to 2010.

In order to map the listening audience extensive analysis of the audience figures was conducted. Digital platforms are also being examined to ascertain any impact on the listening landscape.

The big picture

The first chart presents an overview or ‘picture’ of the whole 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland across the day. What stands out is the huge surge in afternoon listening to RTE Radio 1. In comparison to other North European audiences, such afternoon ‘spikes’ with perhaps the exception of Portugal are largely unknown.

Fig 4.0 National stations: ‘all adult’ reach throughout the day (Source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI).

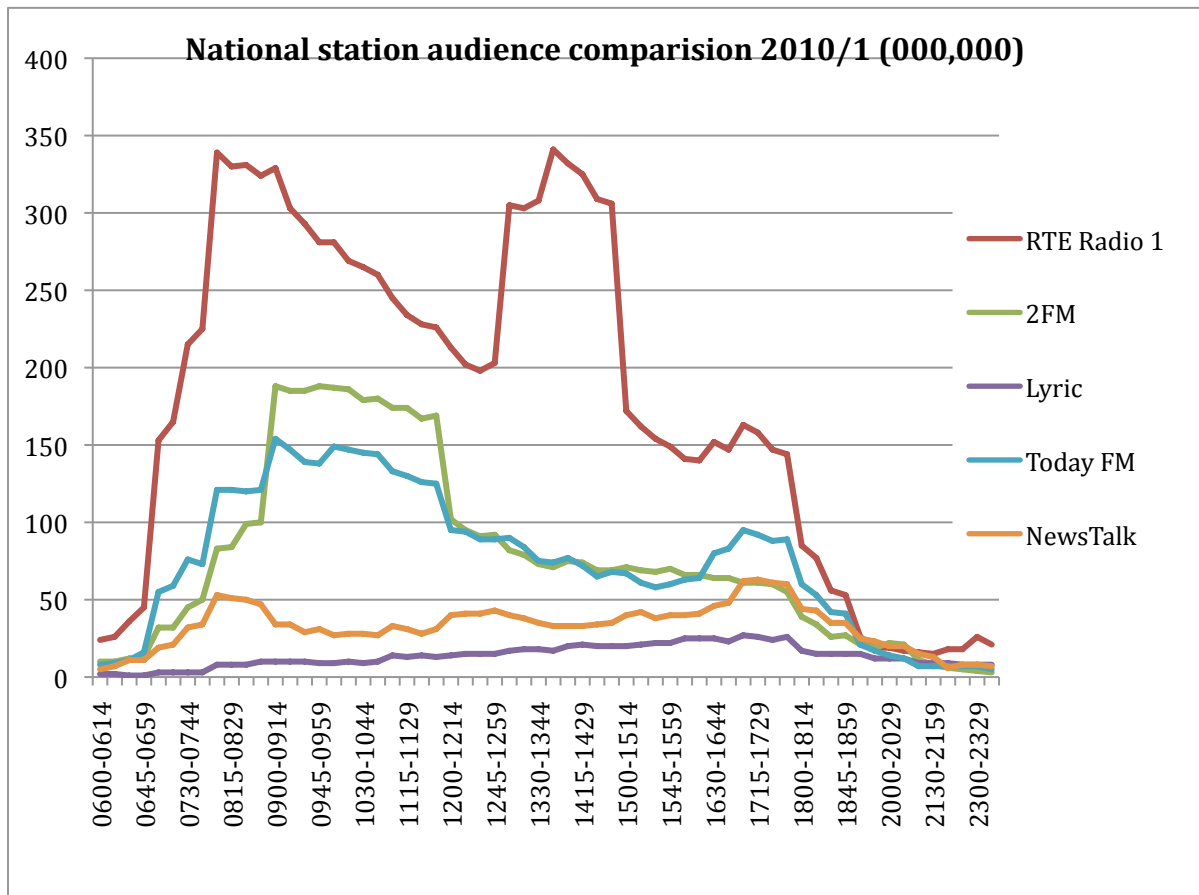


Fig 4.0 showing how each national station compares in ‘reach’ across the broadcasting day. The total ‘all adult’ audience is at the height of the breakfast period, where RTE Radio 1’s *Morning Ireland* has 339,000 adults (15-years +) at 8.00AM listening. 2FM’s breakfast show performs poorly, however, the audience surges at 9.00AM from 100,000 to 188,000 listeners.

In contrast to RTE 1, NewsTalk 106's breakfast show reaches a maximum 53,000 listeners, while at drive-time, *The Right Hook* show peaks at 62,000.

What is extraordinary is the huge afternoon audience manufactured by RTE's *Liveline*. At 341,000 listeners, this represents the peak of the day. This goes against all European models, where there is usually a slump between lunchtime and drive-time (5.00PM – 7.00PM). Interestingly, when *Liveline* ends, the listeners appear to actually stop listening, they seem to switch off with no transfer to other services.

Listening by age profiles

Radio has long ceased to be a 'one size fits all' listening proposition. Different age groupings of demographics come and consume the medium and different time periods throughout the listening day. While peak time is 'breakfast' for most, younger profiles - especially the 20-24-year-olds - come late, but their listening is steady and sustained across day.

Fig 4.1 Different demographics across the listening day (Source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI)

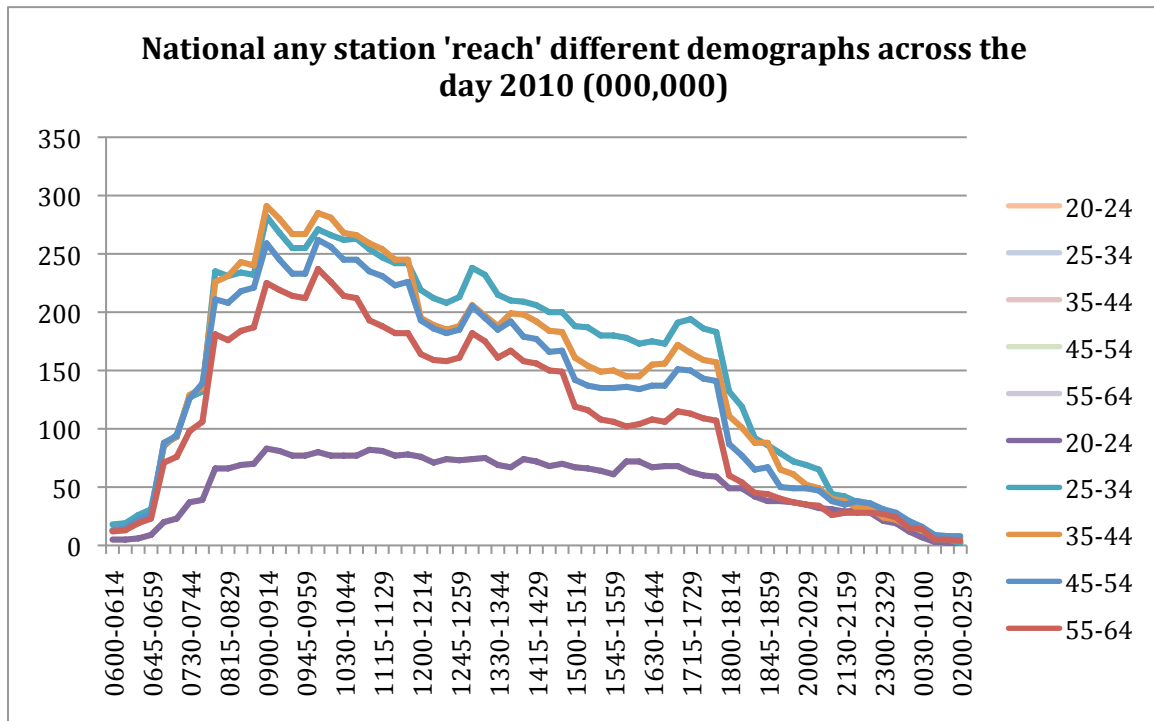


Fig 4.1 reveals the vast attraction that radio holds for various defined demographics. Rather surprisingly, radio's highest reach is for 35-44-year-olds and not the 55-64-year-olds. This peak occurs at 9.00AM. Therefore out of 660,000 total adults in that age group in the country, approximately forty four percent or 291,00 tune in to a national radio station between 9.00AM – 9.14AM.

At the opposite end of the spectrum in the 20-24-year-old age group, 83,000 out of a potential population of 966,000 in that age group tune in or just 8.5%. However, the line graph for this age grouping shows more of a plateau over the entire day.

Fig 4.2 National audience, All adults ‘quarter hr’ ‘reach’ (Source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI)

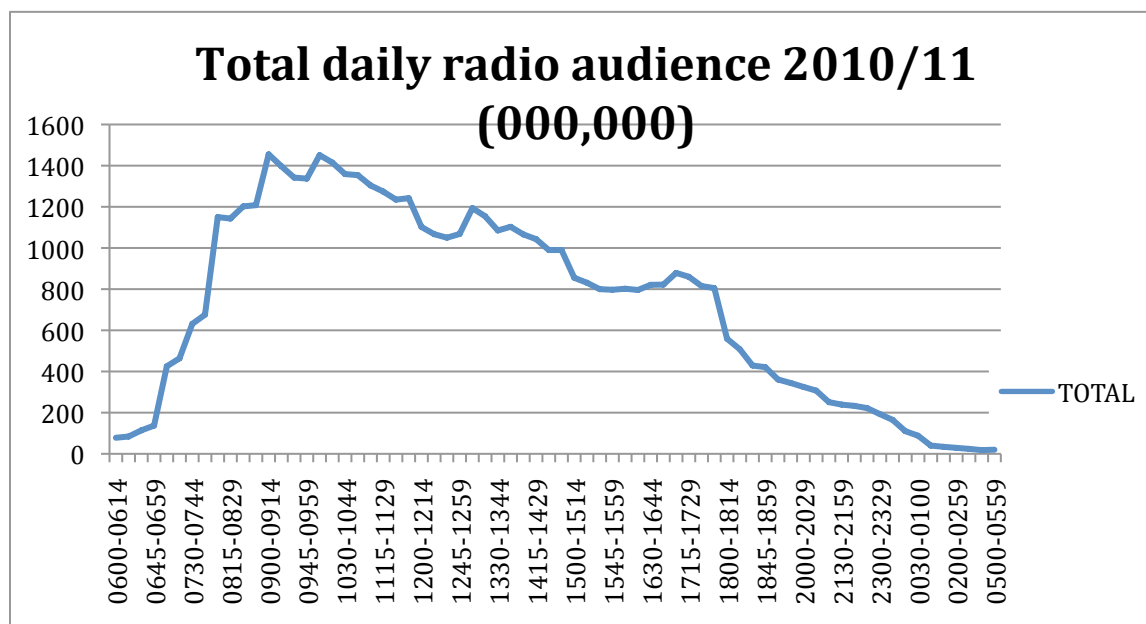


Figure 4.2 The above line chart details the reach into the universal adult population (3.529 million) mapping the adult audience across the typical weekday. 1,455,000 are tuned into radio at 9.00AM or about forty one percent of the adult population. The overall chart is typical of the radio day. Audiences rise in the morning and radio offers it strongest programmes - either news or current affairs in the case of RTE Radio 1 or NewsTalk 106 FM, or upbeat music-driven shows (Crisell, 1986; Hendy, 2000b; Scannell, 1996).

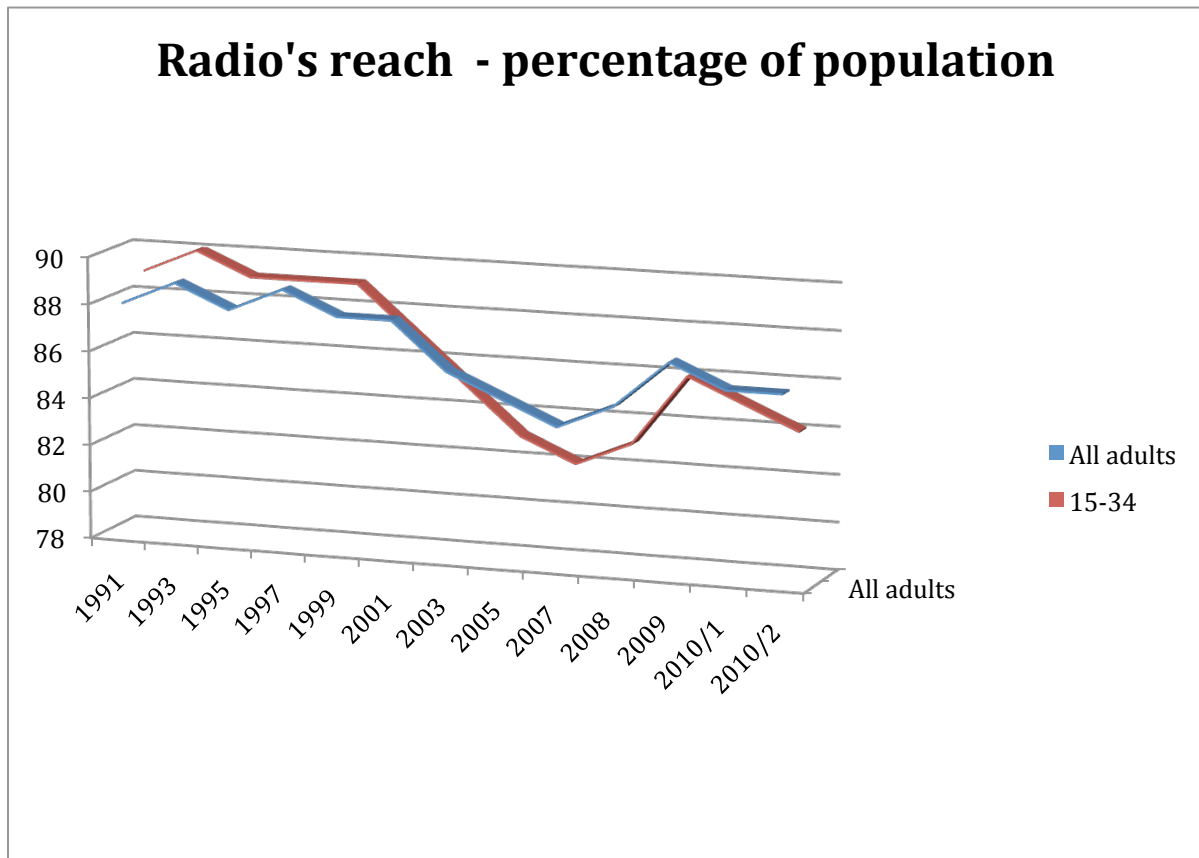
Slow decline in general listenership

Might radio listenership be affected by the economic downturn in the radio and advertising markets since 2007? Moreover, is there a connection between talk of ‘gloom and doom’ on radio and the listeners of such content? Some media commentators have written about RTE radio’s coverage of the recession, suggesting that it is overly negative. Indeed, the Communications Minister, Pat Rabbitte, when interviewed for a newspaper stated that RTE had a ‘diet of constant gloom and doom [...] it seems to me to be mostly an unending and interminable dirge of misery’.³⁰ And again later, the minister commented ‘There is an all-pervasive negativity in the media that is not helping the mood of a people that is in distress and difficulty’.³¹ The decline succeeding the ‘boom’ years and the crash that followed is illustrated graphically in the following.

³⁰ Irish Daily Mirror ‘Fear is the News, Rabbitte blasts RTE gloom, 8th February 2012 <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-279332330.html> [accessed date: 12/3/2012]

³¹ The Irish Times ‘Rabbitte accuses media of damaging democracy by ‘denigrating’ politics, 4th January 2013 <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2013/0104/1224328424174.html> [accessed date: 9/1/2013]

Fig 4.3 All adults –vs.- 15-34-year-olds 1991-2010 (Source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI)

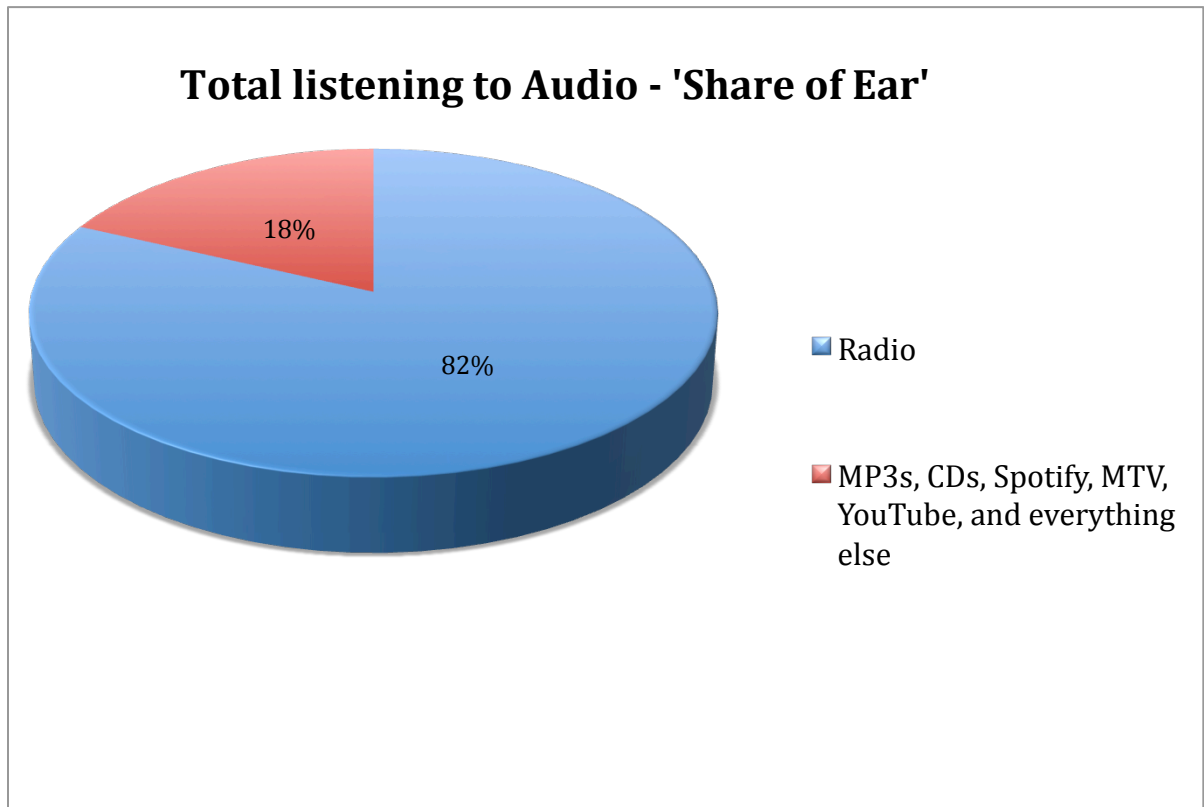


Radio still remains a highly popular medium to the Irish audience. Figure 4.3 demonstrates both the 'National' 'All Adult' and 15-34-year-old demographic together. 'All Adult' audiences reached an all time high in 1993 when 89 percent listened on a daily basis – falling to 86 percent in 2010. For the 15-34-year-old demographic, it declined from 90 percent to 84 percent over the same period. However, in general, they dropped to their lowest level in 2007, picked up in 2009 and declined again in the following period. What's interesting is that in both the general 'all adult' (15-years and over) and younger profile (15-34-year-olds) are

largely in sync with what turns them on or off with the medium. In the second quarter of 2010, the 'all adult' audience stood at 86 percent, down from a high of 89 percent in 2009. In the UK however, the same quarter for 2010 showed a very buoyant 91 percent of the +15 years plus tuning in (Source: RAJAR). What causes particular years to suffer a decline in Irish listenership is a matter of conjecture. Perhaps a surging economy offers up many distractions to steal people away from their radio sets. Conversely, the catastrophic collapse of the Irish economy here has seen a re-engagement with the medium followed by another decline due, it could be argued, to the unrelenting bad news. However, in times of national and local emergencies, radio excels in being an immediate and reliable source of news and information. BBC Radio 4 obtained its highest audience figures during the first Gulf War. The station increased its coverage of news and became known as 'Skud FM' (Hendy, 2007).

Share of ear

Fig 4.4 Radio -vs.- other music platforms. Total listening to Audio - 'Share of Ear' (Source: BBC Share of Ear study, April 2010)



Digital and online radio figures for Ireland are under researched and are 'guesstimates' at best. However, it is revealing to look to the UK to see some analysis that provides indicators to what is to be expected in Ireland. Figure 4.4 displays the results of a survey carried out by the BBC to identify the competition to radio for music from online and personal music collections. Perhaps surprisingly, radio is doing well. Radio occupies a very important curatorial role when it comes to music.

Online radio

Radio's new method of consumption is online; this is complementary to the main FM over-the-air methods (O'Neill, 2010; Whittle, 2004). Online, BBC Radio 4 averaged 155,574 weekly unique browsers, 1,737,364 monthly live listening requests, and 313,890 monthly catch-up listening requests.³² In the UK where DAB is long established, listening via that platform is at 18-percent weekly share (source: RAJAR. Q3:2011). In March 2010, the biggest downloaded monthly podcast was for *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, BBC Radio 4's flagship 15-minute history series produced in partnership with the British Museum. This generated 972,933 unique monthly downloads.³³ Podcasts and listen again facilities are providing much-needed 'added value' to radio's existing proposition. Ireland's commercial broadcasters see the digital future as being best served via mobile and device apps as against over the air DAB (digital audio broadcasting) and younger listeners appear prepared to pay for bandwidth to listen to otherwise free to air FM services.³⁴

³² (September 2011) Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/siteusage/>

³³ (March 2010) Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/siteusage/>

³⁴ 'The old 'wireless' get a digital makeover' in The Irish Times 29.3.2012
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/finance/2012/0329/1224314041696.html> [accessed 29th March 2012]

Listening: which platform?

Some listeners might suppose that nearly all listening is done via a digital device and that radio via the FM platform is perhaps in steep decline? Again, Irish figures are hard to come by but figures for the more established UK market are more available for easy comparison.

FIG 4.5 UK Total number of hours per which platform (Source: RAJAR Q3/2011)

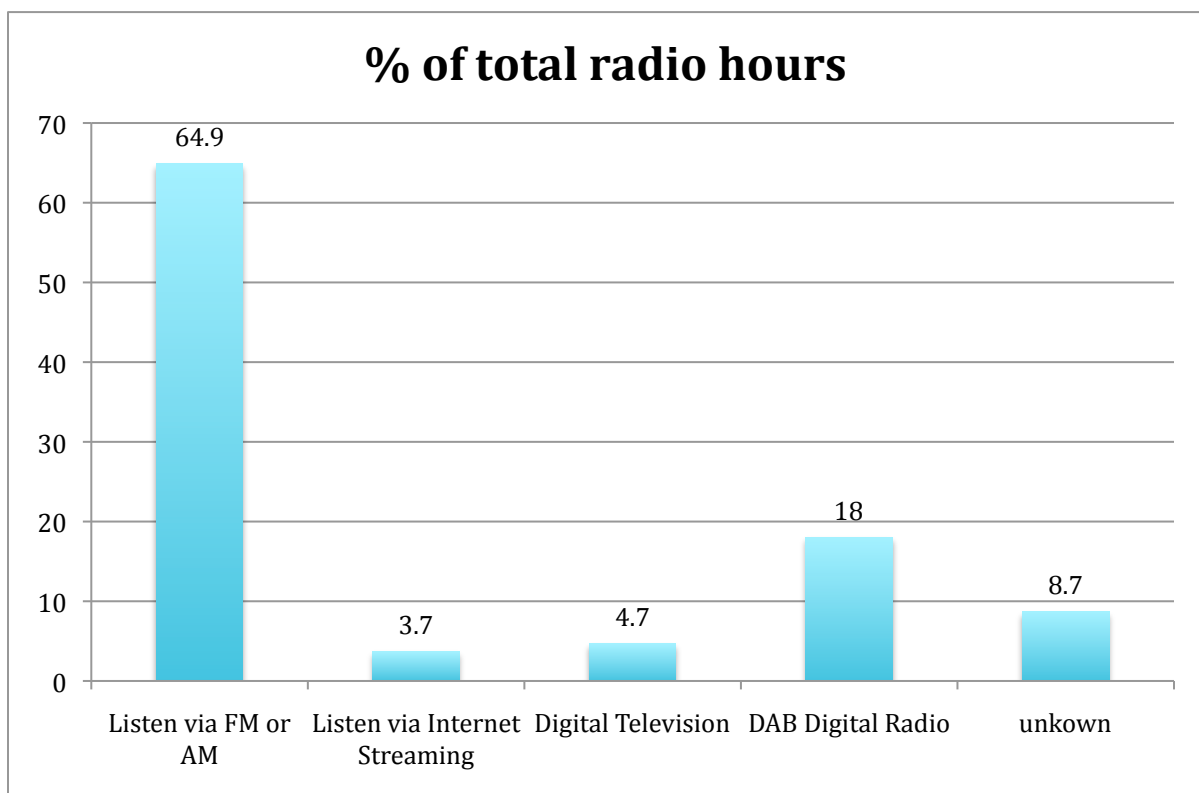


Figure 4.5 shows data from the UK that reveals that listening to radio via a traditional FM/AM receiver still accounts for the most popular way of listening to radio at 64.9 percent. DAB still only accounts for just 18 percent. Listening via a digital

television is more popular at 4.7 percent than online streaming which, rather surprisingly, still languishes at just 3.7 percent. Again in the UK, the promising recent initiative between the pan-industry internet radio service RadioPlayer and the audio social media company Audioboo to come together to offer an instant ‘listen again’ facility on the RadioPlayer for all commercial and BBC stations might go some way to increase the online proposition of radio.

Dublin listeners

Outside of the capital, ‘Home Local’ stations as they are referred to, do in the main, take on and beat RTE’s national services in terms of ‘reach’ and ‘market share’. This is not surprising as the local stations have developed and nurtured their respective audiences with a comprehensive full service of news and local interest items. In the commuter counties that border Co. Dublin, competition is intense and the Home Local stations battle RTE, the nationals (public and commercial) and a suite of Dublin commercial stations with strong signals that spill over into the neighbouring county and in some cases beyond. The result is heavy market fragmentation and in some cases a dilution of more local sound as the home local has to balance the output between local and a more generic sound.

However it is worth looking at the Co. Dublin audience to see what change has occurred as more stations have been granted radio licences.

Fig 4.6 County Dublin ‘all adult’ audience ‘listened yesterday’ reach, 2000 vs. 2012 (source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI).

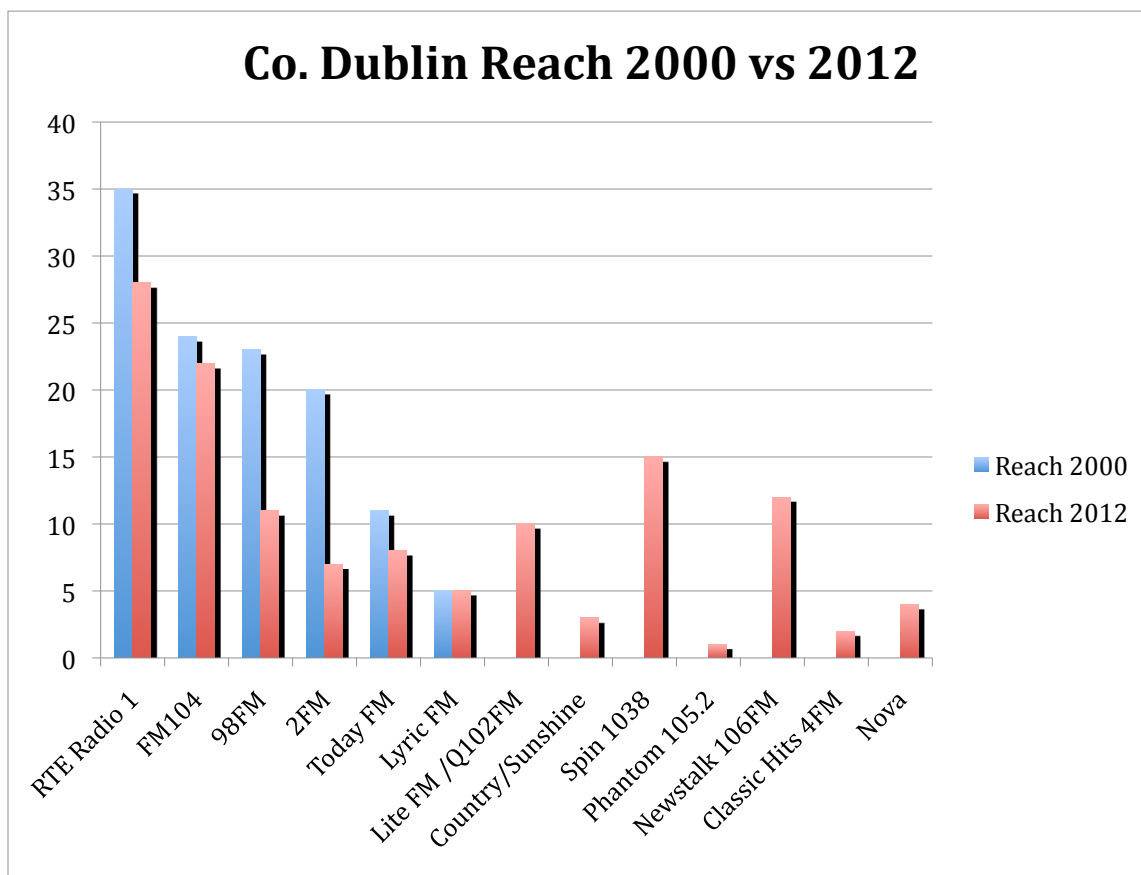


Figure 4.6 shows RTE Radio and the newer stations in the Dublin market. Although RTE Radio 1’s reach reduces from 35 percent to 28 percent, it still enjoys a commanding lead over all others. 98FM’s reach falls most to 11 percent. Newstalk 106FM became a national station mid-cycle and now enjoys 12 percent reach. 2FM has suffered the largest reduction in reach in this ‘all adult’ audience; once, one of the top players at 20 percent and now dropping to 7 percent. New players

LiteFM/Q102FM and Spin 1038FM entered the market and have since gained a strong foothold. The most recent licenced music stations made small gains. Nova has quickly acquired 4 percent while multi-city station Classic Hits 4 FM struggles with just 2 percent of the capital's audience.

Most competition for audience is played out between the peak times of 7.00AM and 7.00PM before television and other domestic distractions and necessities take over. Commercial stations try hardest to win market share and deliver total and targeted audience to advertisers.

Fig 4.7 Co. Dublin market share 7am-7pm 2000 vs. 2012 (source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI).

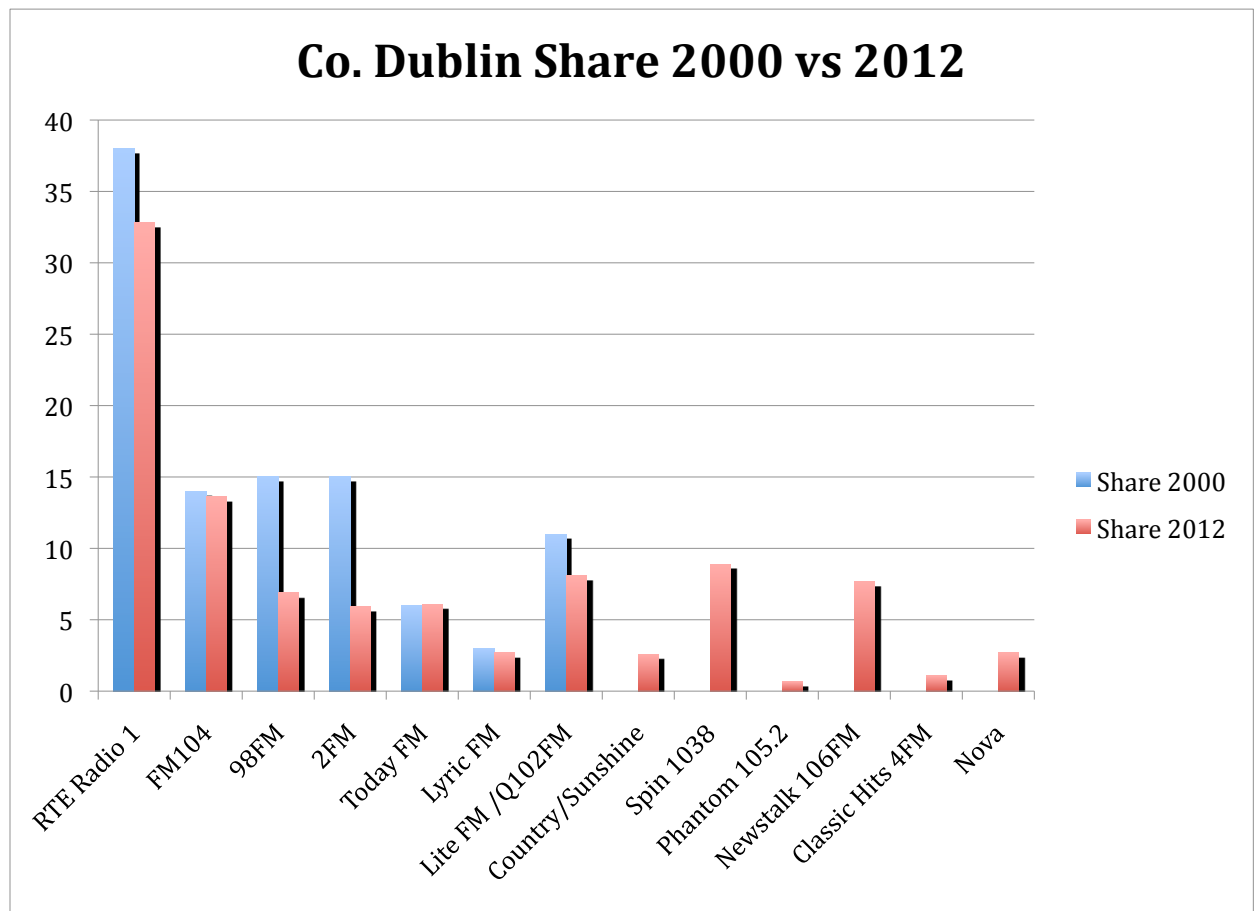


Fig. 4.7 reveals that RTE Radio 1 is taking the lion's share of the Dublin market.

From a once lofty height of 38 percent, the station now has 32.8 percent share, still far ahead of any of its nearest rivals. The chart hides some interesting realities.

Dublin commercial stations are mainly music driven services and largely compete for specific target audiences and succeed very well when one hones in on their stated target age group. For example in the 15-24-year-olds, Spin103.8 FM holds a staggering 40.3 percent share!

Spin 103.8 FM also takes 23.2 percent of the 25-34-year-old demograph. However, the market leader in this age grouping is FM 104 with 27.2 percent. RTE Radio 1 and 2FM trail far behind in comparison, with 4.7 percent and 4.9 percent respectfully.

To native Dubliners and non-native ‘blow-ins’ (as they are affectionately known), RTE Radio 1 is seen as a full service station that appeals on several fronts. It has more ‘personality’ than the music-driven services. *Liveline*, is presented by Dubliner Joe Duffy, is one of RTE Radio 1’s most popular afternoon programmes (Joe who is Trinity educated but with a strong local accent). Other RTE daytime presenters are also from the Dublin area; including Shay Byrne, Marian Finucane, Pat Kenny and Derek Mooney. So it could be suggested that due to the proximity of the studios in Donnybrook to Dublin, the programme content and the native Dublin presenters all add up to a National station with a strong appeal to Dubliners. The presenters will be discussed in greater detail in the Qualitative Research Findings and Discussion chapter.

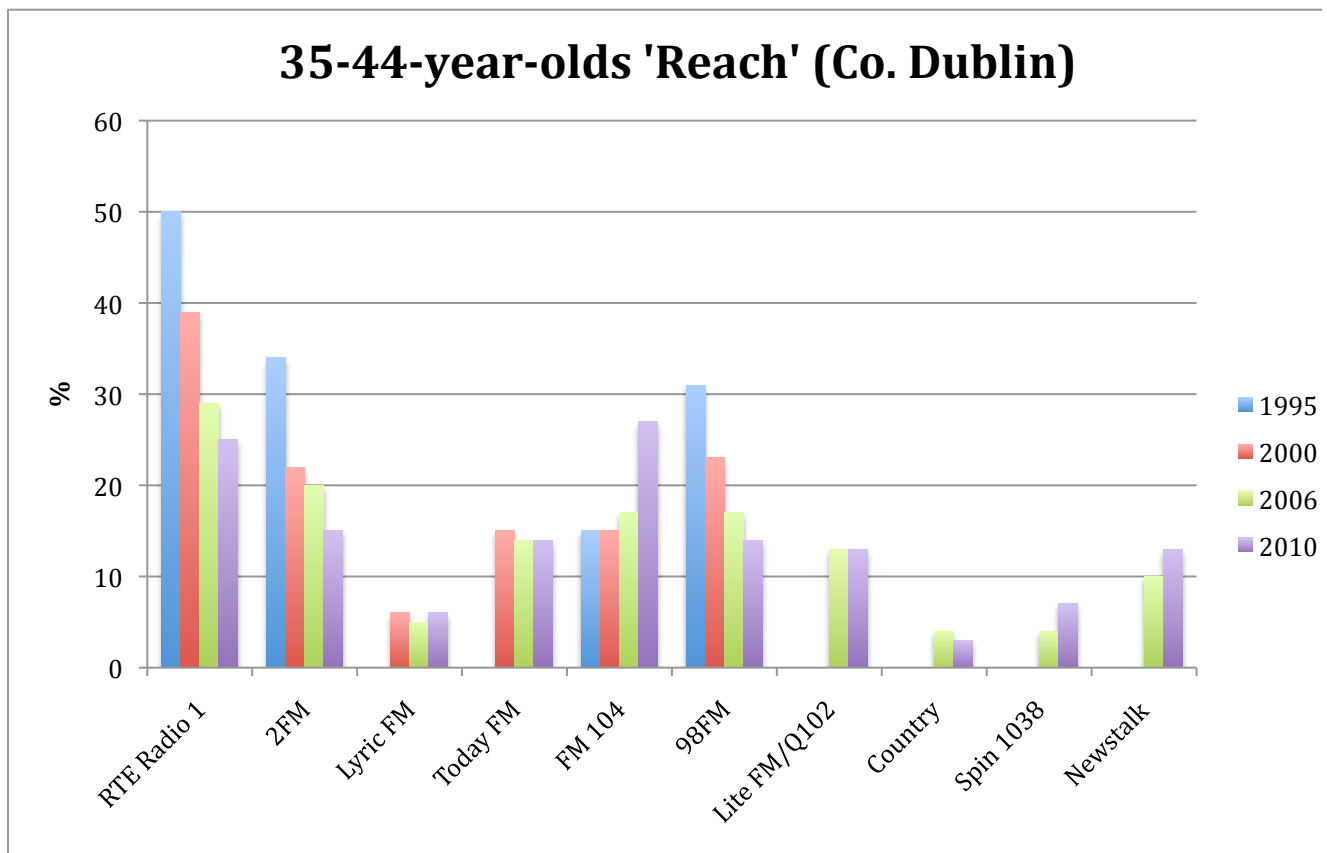
Audience Fragmentation

More services means poaching and trying to keep another station’s listeners. More choice makes it difficult for RTE radio to defend on all fronts. In Dublin, RTE Radio 1 maintains dominant position. However and perhaps to be expected, the station has

lost half of its ‘reach’ from its ‘next in line’ to its heartland audience of 50-year-olds.

The lost 35-44-year-olds ‘replenishers’ are enticed elsewhere.³⁵

Fig 4.8 35-44-year-olds ‘Reach’ Co. Dublin (source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI).



The very nature of audience fragmentation can be viewed on the above chart. Fig 4.8 displays the fall-off in ‘reach’ for RTE Radio 1 in the Co. Dublin market place. In 1995, there were 140,000 adults in the 35-44-year-old demographic; RTE Radio 1 reached 50 percent of them. This ‘reach’ has fallen year-on-year and RTE Radio 1’s ‘reach’ or ‘Listened Yesterday’ is now at 25 percent. 2FM’s ‘reach’ has dropped

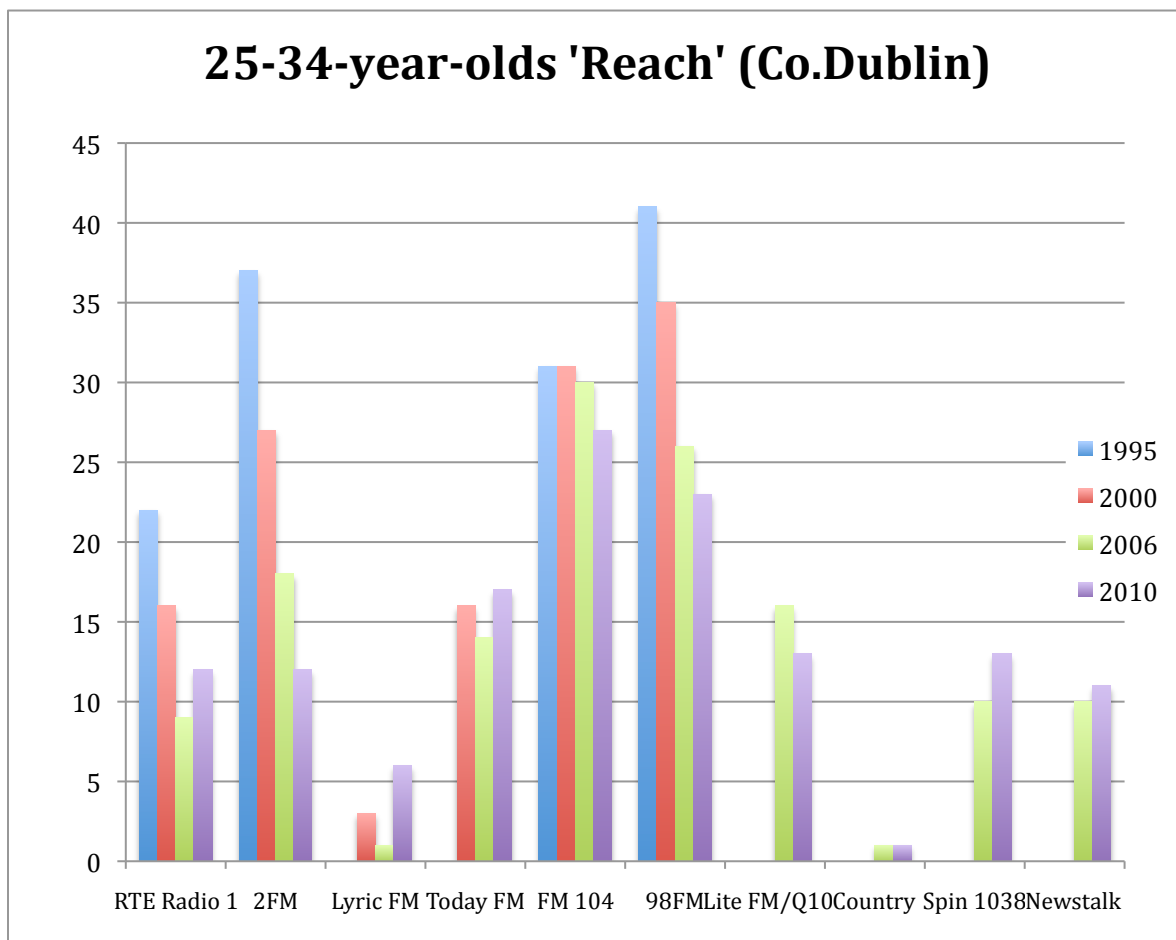
³⁵ The audience decline is more serious in Cork city (the ‘second’ city). Local stations command the top spot with Cork’s 96/103FM with 48 percent ‘reach’ and RTE Radio 1 at 26 percent (Source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI October 2010 – September 2011).

from 34 percent to 15 percent over the same period. Conversely, FM 104's 'reach' has grown from 15 percent to 27 percent. During this timeframe, NewsTalk 106 FM has gone from being a Dublin only station to becoming a licensed quasi-national station.³⁶ In the Co. Dublin market, NewsTalk 106 FM's 'reach' with this audience profile stands at 13 percent. It appears that Q102 FM (formerly Lite FM) has made almost instant traction with this audience with its particular brand of light pop music.

This slide is also important in respect of the schedule of participants interviewed for this research. With ages ranging from 26-years-old to 60-years-old, the average age of the twenty-one participants was 42-years-old; just within range of the top end of this age grouping (35-44). In fact, more than one-third of the interviewees are precisely located in the 35-44-year-old bracket.

³⁶ This term used by the regulator refers to being almost national in coverage. owing to limited availability of FM frequencies to enable the station to achieve 98 percent coverage which is regarded as being the necessary percent to be regarded as a national service.

Fig 4.9 25-34-year-olds 'Reach' Co. Dublin (source: JNLR/Ipsos MRBI).



It is a similar story of fragmentation and fall-off with Fig 4.9 RTE Radio 1's reach in the 25-34-year-old age group has reduced from 22 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2010. While 2FM's reach has fallen steeply from a high of 37 percent to 12 percent in a highly competitive radio market place. The biggest gains are to newcomers Spin 1038FM and NewsTalk.

Potential audience dilemmas for RTE Radio

One can see the appeal of the various music stations and in particular, FM 104 with its contemporary hit music format. It is only in the last couple of years that FM 104 seized this big increase in 'reach'. Perhaps in times of recession, people return to the music to avoid bad news. What is very surprising is revealed when looking at the 'reach' for 98FM. In 1998, the station achieved a 31 percent 'reach' with this age group. This station incidentally, was the first commercial station to be awarded a license back in 1989. Its initial appeal was that it played lots of hits back-to-back with 'less talk, more music'. It seems however, that this unique selling point of slick almost anonymous DJs has worn thin with this age demographic. Its 'reach' has now fallen by over fifty percent to just 14 percent. Perhaps the most important insight to be gleaned from the figure 4.8 is that the age group (35-44-year-olds) is also seen as future 'replenishers' to RTE Radio 1. This means, that as the existing Radio 1 audience ages and 'departs' - it is imperative that the station recruits new listeners, and these 'replenishers' are from this 35-44-year-old demographic.

The trouble is that other stations are attracting listeners away from RTE Radio 1. Moreover, even 2FM has witnessed over 50 percent of a fall-off in this age profile. Figure 4.9 demonstrates the sharp decline in the 25-34-year-old demograph of both RTE Radio 1 and its stable mate 2FM. For the latter, the loss audience reach in this important youth market over this fifteen-year period is very clearly seen.

Conclusion

To conclude, RTE Radio 1's reach with 35-44-year-olds has gone from 54 percent in 1994 to 23 percent in 2010. 2FM's reach with this audience profile has dropped from 34 percent in 1994 to 18 percent over the same period. The 'Any RTE' figure has suffered a significant fall from a high of 73 percent to 35 percent. In addition, the loss to competitors in the younger 25-34-year-olds leaves RTE Radio in a very real dilemma, as its potential 'replenishers' are attracted and recruited to other services.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter examines and analyses the participants' responses to questions put to them in the in-depth interviews. The aim of the interviews was to gain a deeper insight into the audience's perception of RTE Radio 1, in particular, and to explore their understanding of the concept of PSB. The interviews further explored the role of the presenter and programmes in engaging and winning appeal. The interviews also sought to explore the early experiences of users and the socialisation of radio as a medium and to establish if early listening references and impressions have any link to an individual's current listening pattern. The chapter draws extensively from verbatim quotations from the research participants illustrate the 'voice' of the listener. Interviews were held first in 2005 with follow up interviews in 2012 to identify changes and trends in listeners' attitudes.

Remembering early childhood listening

Participants were asked if they could recall their earliest memory of radio. This question elicited affectionate responses about the apparatus itself, the location of listening, particular personalities, quirky programmes and associated signature tunes and jingles.

Most participants remembered the kitchen as being the principal location for listening. They were often in the company of a parent (most likely a mother); while a couple of the participants recall being in a grandparent's house.

Because the radio held a unique pride of place in the kitchen, being remembered as a background accompaniment to everyday activities, and able to provide familiar music and news on a scheduled basis meant that the socialization process began at an early age and the listening habit remained lifelong, cementing the emotional and functional side of the medium. As Scannell noted about BBC Radio 4, becoming embedded in his daily routine: it became 'part of my life, a heard but unnoticed life support system that unobtrusively underpins the rhythms and routines of my daily life' (Scannell, 2009:94-95). Listeners recall hearing particular signature tunes, which they, in the main, correctly identified with the programme:

[I'd] get up as a kid around 8 o'clock and you would hear O'Donnell Abu on the radio (recites tune). And then the 8 o'clock news would come on and you would have sponsored programmes. Like, *Finahan's of Finglas*. (recites the sfx 'Cock-a-doodle-do..') Or the *Jacobs Programme* or one of those sponsored ones between eight and nine in the morning. They were 15 minutes or 12 minutes [in

length]³⁷. You would hear those in the morning before we went out to school.

(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)

Some listeners recall the early radio apparatus holding pride of place, either in the kitchen, or, as a distinct piece of furniture in the more formal sitting or family room. Tuning the dial meant hearing foreign voices and languages when the needle hovered over names like Hilversum and Helsinki. The BBC cut through with its precise delivery and one listener recalled the far-away places on the tuning dial.

Because of habit and lack of competition, the radio station was rarely, if ever, changed - 'my father listened to Radio 1 *all* the time' (Lisa, PhD student, 35-44). The radio seemed to be a constant companion throughout the daytime hours for all participants. Strict silence would be required for news bulletins with music programmes seeming to bridge a generational gap to forge tastes and preferences for later in life. Listening with mother meant taking an extra interest in what was on.

I do remember things like *Hospital Requests* and all that which again my mother liked to listen to so therefore I focused in on them. That would have been when I was quite a small child.

(Mary, librarian, 55-64)

³⁷ Prerecorded sponsored programmes were a regular part of the 1969 Radio Éireann schedule, airing at 8.30AM, 1.00PM and 1.45PM(Balfe, 2007:129).

For some younger listeners, illegal or ‘pirate’ radio held a fascination. A profusion of pirate radio stations struck up in make shift studios in the late-1970s – mid-1980s and the sonic quality was often found lacking. Studios were often makeshift affairs that could be dismantled quickly in the event of a ‘raid’. One listener, remarked on the perceived lack of audio quality from the pirates

I also remember as a teenager, the pirate stations. They started coming in. Radio Dublin - and they always sounded as if they were in the bottom of a bin.

(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

However, when the ‘super pirates’ Radio Nova and Sunshine 101 came on in 1981, the quality and presentation values of these two pirates was at such a professional level that their influence continued long after their closedowns (Mulryan, 1988). One listener Lisa, mistakenly cited Atlantic 252 as being a pirate. Perhaps the jukebox nature and the fact that although it broadcast from Ireland on Long Wave into the UK, it had a ‘rebel’ appeal attached to it just like Radio Luxembourg’s appeal decades earlier.³⁸

³⁸ Atlantic 252 was a Long Wave radio station broadcasting into the UK from Trim, Co. Meath in Ireland. It commenced in 1989. It was briefly replaced with TeamTalk 252 during 2002 before RTE the frequency was re-subsumed by RTE in 2002 to provide a version of Radio 1 to the expatriate community in the UK.

Older interviewees recalled the sound of a particular day as standing out. Listeners recalled hearing sports commentaries on a Sunday afternoon from Micheal O’Hehir and for one participant, it evoked a rich memory of distant summers.

It’s actually funny, even last Sunday it was a nice sunny day. I was out in the back garden and the sports was on, GAA like, you know, you could hear it coming through the house, that’s my earliest memory listening to the GAA maybe or sports on the radio on a Sunday afternoon.

(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)

Teenage listening – soundtrack for future reference

Participants were asked about listening during their teenage years. This question was framed to get an insight into the importance of radio, and in particular, music radio, in the lives of the adolescent. It is worth pointing out that with all the listeners questioned for this research, this would have been a period prior to national commercial radio, which only began in Ireland in 1988. Although based outside of Ireland, BBC Radio 1³⁹ and Radio Luxembourg were both received on Medium Wave in Ireland and were considered part of the range of stations that the participants remember and mention.

³⁹ BBC Radio 1 was part of a new suite of national radio networks from the BBC and commenced broadcasting on 30th September 1969.

Brian, one of the participants grew-up in a border town and because his family had access to UK television signals from as early as 1955 they largely ignored radio in favour of the television. It wasn't until his teenage years that radio would make an impression.

[My] earliest memory of listening to the radio would be I suppose as a teenager listening to pop music on Radio Luxembourg - if I were to put a date on that it would have been probably early 60s when the great pop music machine was taking off.

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

Radio Luxembourg is mentioned several times by older listeners like Brian. With its Top-40 format, friendly excited DJs, Luxembourg stood out against the BBC Home and Light services whose music presenters with their 'sober and formal [...] dinner-jacket announcers' and were restricted on the amount of recorded music they could play (Chapman, 1992:9). This was even more so on Sundays when 'Reith's Sundays' drove younger listeners to Luxembourg and the off-shore pirate, Radio Caroline in their droves (Crisell, 1997:50). Often parents restricted teenagers from listening, but it would be turned back on under the covers as soon as the coast was clear. Often, to hear the music through the Medium Wave interference was difficult, but young listeners stuck with it, as they didn't know any different.

Listeners remember the appeal of Top-40 chart hits radio; vastly appealing 'the sound of today' to the adolescent but maybe heard as repetitive and puerile to the adult more

preoccupied with news and current-affairs and music from past decades. Older siblings played an important curatorial role in what was on the radio. John's comment indicates the role of older siblings in the household and how their preferences could influence taste.

I'm from a family where a lot of brothers would be older than I.
They'd have it on so I'd be listening to what they'd be listening to and
I wouldn't have much choice. [*Q Would you change it?*]
Ah no, the fact of the matter is the older brother would have it on and
you dare not change the station and that was it.
(John, engineer, 45-54)

Listeners also recall listening to Dublin station 98FM and how 'all the shows sounded the same'. This was the precise appeal of a heavily formatted music station, high rotation of the chart hits in a row and a minimum amount of DJ chatter.

The importance of music to people's lives is perhaps already taken for granted. It has been mentioned above how the listeners engaged with radio as a teenager. Moreover, music preferences from an adolescent's teenage years, forms into an unbreakable 'soundtrack' that accompanies them throughout their adult lives. *Angie Baby*, Helen Reddy's radio friendly hit with its cryptic lyrics from 1974, expressed in song the inner anxieties of the teenage listener and her attempt to make sense of her confused life through the lyrics she hears from 'the rock and roll radio'. This was conveyed

effectively in Lavinia Greenslaw's research, capturing the significance of music as the author made the transition, from crushes, to posters, to disco dancing.

What takes three minutes to play seemed to take ten minutes to listen to. It provoked emotions and suggested circumstances I couldn't wait to experience – being trapped by regret or riveted by desire; trying to be offhand about passion or grown-up about loss; moving on or giving in. It was, for me, a rehearsal of feeling (Greenslaw, 2007:28).⁴⁰

Music radio plays a defining role in the life of the young listener. It contributes to individual identity and emotional development (Mather, 2004; Meyer, 1961). As van Dijck described in his analysis of personal accounts to the music chosen for the Dutch Top 2000, it is vital to the construction of personal and collective memory (van Dijck, 2006).

In addition to the story of sound of an object we hear, our memories also retain emotional reactions to it [...] Upon later recall, recorded songs work as triggers, bringing back waves of emotion, the specificity of a time, an event, a relationship, or evoking more general feelings. (van Dijck, 2006:360-361)

⁴⁰ For a fascinating tale about the lyrics of songs and their influence on children and adolescents refer to Christopher Green's autobiographical radio drama. *Afternoon Drama – Like an Angel Passing through My Room*. BBC Radio 4 Tx date: 16th February 2011. Green imagined and lived his childhood years through the lyrics from the songs of Swedish pop band Abba. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00yj97j>

Listening to music on radio often allows for what van Dijck refers to as an ‘inside sensation’ when the listener through the music they hear on the radio becomes aware that they are part of a relationship that extends to a wider community (2006: 265), a relationship between self and others, that contributes to an individual’s sociality (Rothenbuhler, 1996; Tacchi, 1998). Music that is heard on the radio or shared from friends’ CD collections during the listeners’ adolescent and teenage years is fondly recalled by the participants in this study, albeit with new hindsight giving it a new context for its social and cultural significance. Particular songs become ‘our songs’ as listeners recall the time and place that they associate with listening to a particular song. One participant recalls hearing Ska tunes when he was just thirteen and being excited by the content and vibe they created.

Being able to place the time through the song. I would yeah. The one *Video Killed the Radio Star*, again I’d lived in Kilkenny at the time and remember my friends playing it in their radio and would make that connection with that song.

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

The stories are highly personal and each time the song is heard, the memories from that time flood back and locations are instantly pinpointed, just like viewing an old photograph.

Oh yes. Oh yeah. I remember I was living abroad for a while and was going out with an American actually, it was only when I was in my twenties. And we kept in contact or whenever and I remember that song called *Captain of Her Heart* [Double] and I knew that the relationship was going nowhere. I remember because my mother was sick. And I started going out with another guy but I remember that song *Captain of Her Heart* by ... (prompted by PH..Double) yes! Any anytime I hear it now it reminds me of that time.

(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

I spent most of my childhood in hospital until I was in 20s and I would certainly remember some songs would put me straight into a hospital bed. Others would, you know, your first dance or, you know. Different memories would always come back with music definitely. Some are good and some aren't good.

(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)

Music is one of radio's main currencies; it can occupy up to eighty percent of a station's output. Even if younger listeners can get their music 'fix' elsewhere, radio potentially harbours something that can entice them back. It would seem from the above, that music connects you with your earlier self and your experiences.⁴¹

⁴¹ This might explain why BBC Radio 2 is the most popular network in the UK. Comprising music from the past and up-to-date songs provides the right mix. Add to that presenters 'played by a great line up' and you have a great combination.

Influences from early listening on later listening patterns

The music choice and station preference proved to be very significant in how music was first heard and from what source. Being conscious of what parents or older siblings listened to appeared in some cases to be a determining factor in how these listeners acquired a taste in music and future radio listening habits.

I would probably listen to kind of ten year previous thing because of the siblings being older so if I hear kind of 60s, 70s music which is, you know, I was born in '66. I'm a little too late for that but I'd certainly tune into that because of that early influence.

(Barry, economist, 35-44)

...for the last fifteen years it would be consistently Radio 1 would be my staple diet in terms of radio so in the last fifteen years but I suppose prior to that I would have been a bit more, I don't know, youthful I suppose, you could say if that was the word. And I think I like it because my father liked it.

(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

Most participants remarked how songs that their parents liked listening to have been inherited in some way by them. Certainly some the songs had enduring qualities, and perhaps being exposed to them by parents or older siblings, might have added additional allure. Another common statement was that the music of one's teenage

years, along with the social and cultural associations with it, was brought with one into middle age.

I'd still listen to a lot of the same sort of bands or the same sort of genre music definitely. Newer bands that have come up but yeah definitely I've still sort of stuck with same sort of things from my teenage years.

(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

I still listen to U2, still listen to Madonna, so those, I mean those artists that are still here.

(Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

Mary who was exposed to radio drama on Radio Éireann as a young child continues to this day to seek out radio drama on RTE Radio 1 to listen to. Another respondent stated that his mother's choice of RTE Radio 1 was, he considered, a big factor in his choice today and that even though at one time he liked chart music, he now chose specialist music presenters like Dave Fanning or Tom Dunne to listen to help guide him. A change in lifestyle perhaps necessitates change to listening habits. Just as talking books may facilitate a commuter, talk radio might facilitate a busy mum. For Ashley, becoming a young mum and no longer having personal time at her disposal, meant a voluntary or perhaps ineluctable lifestyle change in listening habits from music radio to news and information.

You grow up and your tastes change. I kinda grew out of music and turned to listen to talk radio. I mean just in your daily routine, you might not have time to read paper so the only way to find their what's going on the world is to listen to current affairs or talk radio. If I can, I'll read paper -- but I don't get the chance I listen to talk radio. Which is the much better way to spend time than listening to say, the top ten.

(Ashley, manager, 35-44)

Ashley's account is somewhat amusingly echoed by former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese when she spoke about how she would ensure that her own two-year-old twins were put down for their morning nap so she could 'sit down with a sticky bun and enjoy her hour with Gaybo'.⁴²

Uses of Radio

The ubiquitous nature of the medium in our lives would lead one to assume that the answer is pretty straightforward. Participants were also asked about the kinds of uses that radio served in their lives. Most commonly, listeners for this research seemed to turn to radio for an instant news update and for analysis of the stories both nationally and the wider stories from around the globe.

The scheduled nature of radio news at the top-of-the-hour seems to allow listeners who lead busy lives to keep abreast of current affairs.

(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

⁴² *Archive Hour: A Cup of Tea, A Sticky Bun and an Hour of Gaybo*. BBC Radio 4, September 1993.

It kind of keeps you up-to-date in what's happening in the world [...]

just nice kind of background information on things.

(Paula, office manager, 25-34)

While reading a newspaper or watching television requires one's full attention, radio however, can exist as a 'secondary' medium (Crisell, 1994; Scannell, 1996). The unobtrusive nature of radio allows for it to be background or foreground.

Participants mentioned that radio could be switched on in the morning to listen to the news of the day and to the happenings from around the world while one can move about and attend to the business at hand. Radio allows a wealth of opinions to be heard that affords the listener an opportunity to reach an informed opinion as to who to support (or not):

I love getting political slants, different slants and hopefully make up my own mind from what I hear as to who I believe I would support. I mean that is very good [about radio] and different slants on different topics.

(John, engineer, 45-54)

[C]lose your eyes and visualise what they're trying to say. As a medium, I think it leaves a lot more freedom for people to interpret,

whereas in television, somebody in Dublin, edits, chops, tells you have to look at. And you have to face this machine.

(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)

One participant signalled out RTE Radio 1's *Seascapes* as being 'appointment' listening even though she was not directly connected with boats or the sea, a topic eloquently written about by media historian David Hendy (Hendy, 2010:221-223). This ability of radio to provide the stories, leaving the listener free to paint the picture or, as Williams puts it, 'imaginative journeys' is one of its crowning strengths (Williams, 1974). The portability of the medium and the fact that you can listen to it to ease the daily grind of commuting, all seems to emphasise what endears the medium to the participants. For one listener, radio conveniently filled the uneasy silence of a car journey.

[C]oming in, I put the radio on and much to herself's displeasure - who doesn't want to talk in the morning (laugh).

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

Music radio made a strong impression on the listeners and indeed continues to occupy a part of their daily listening – albeit on a reduced scale. All of the participants revealed fond memories of music radio, either being attuned by what their parents or siblings were listening to, or as we have seen above, from the preferences from their own adolescent years, during which years the music helped

them ‘negotiate’ the complexity and anxieties and then shaping a ‘soundtrack’ to accompany them in succeeding years. In relation to presenters who rely on music as the main content (for example the music presenters on RTE Radio 1) or the more generic DJs, whose names are often secondary to the ‘product’ of the heavily formatted stations, it might be illuminating to hear how these presenters are perceived by the participants in terms of how these shows being ‘produced’ or ‘constructed’ (Hendy, 2000b).

The individual listeners’ responses ranged in scope from one participant who happened to be a member of a ‘music jury’ who took part in regular online music testing for Dublin station 98FM and so had a particular insight into how music played a crucial role in underpinning the station’s format while yet another who imagined that perhaps just like in the early days of Radio Luxembourg that ‘a lot of what the commercial stations play has been given to them. In that, they've got to be promoting certain music out there’. But perhaps surprising was the degree to which their media literacy was informed by how the music playlists are compiled.

I would have thought that for the main ones it’s probably fairly professionally done in terms of the play lists I would have thought are pre-planned with rare exceptions.

(Barry, economist, 35-44)

I'd say a lot of it is picked by producers and things rather than actually them getting a say. [...] I'd say breakfast shows I'd say is probably picked by producers or whoever is actually doing the show or telling them what's popular rather than them picking it...

(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

I imagine they identify what their target audience is and then play the music they determine appropriate or of interest to them. [...] I don't for one second think that it's just taken off the shelf to grab one in a random order or something like that.

(Paul, lecturer, 45-54)

Most participants differentiated between the presenters of generic music stations that are perceived to have little input into their show's music selection and the RTE Radio 1 presenters and indeed the more specialized music presenters of night-time radio who are assumed to have more music knowledge and therefore to incorporate a large element of personal choices on their respective programmes. These night-time music specialists cater for a more discerning minority 'while more familiar and less demanding music were served before the larger – and therefore more diverse – daytime audiences' (Hendy, 2000a:746). Some recognised the unfamiliarity and uncertainty that can occur when a newer, younger presenter takes over the slot of a more established presenter. In particular, this relates to the time when Ryan Tubridy had just vacated the Breakfast Show on 2FM to take over the weekly 9.00AM –

10.00AM slot of Marian Finucane on RTE Radio 1. Listeners were aware of the need of the new presenter to accomplish the transition between the established sound and the new, careful not to upset the loyal listeners to the Radio 1 slot or worse still, appearing as an imposition on the schedule from unseen managers who know better.

He's a transition rather than a completely new broom and I think he's been careful to play music that probably appeals to some of the older listeners that Finucane would have had plus his own kind of stuff, plus some modern stuff that she probably wouldn't have played.

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

Identifying the distinguishing characteristics of the best presenters

Central to the programming elements and schedule configuration is the key role that is occupied by the presenter, the talent that glues all the produced content together. Even though the presenter knows little if anything about the individual at home, or in the car, the listener nevertheless feels that he/she knows a great deal about the presenter. This relationship is not reciprocal. Nevertheless, the listener is subconsciously aware of being part of a greater community of listeners who are sharing the same experience (Tacchi, 1998).

While a team involving producers and researchers underpin the framework of any given show on national radio, it is the presenter who forms the intimate connection and bond with the listener, ensuring the listener believes that the programme is for

them and for people like them. What then, are the attributes that enable a presenter to connect and communicate so effectively with listeners? Participants were asked to reflect on the qualities of their favourite presenters.

I probably think Marian Finucane is the best thing in RTE because she's intelligent, humane, interested herself, and that kind of interest comes across. She not stupid, she's not there to prove, she doesn't try to set out to prove to the listener how bright, intelligent, clever and smart I am. She's actually trying to bring out the people that she's interviewing or discuss the topic in an objective sort of way and yet she doesn't suffer fools gladly, and if people are coming out with rubbish she'll tackle them on it.

(Mary, librarian, 55-64)

I would say Tom Dunne is probably one of the better ones; I enjoy him always when I listen to him. Dave Fanning to a point and Ray Darcy - I think is definitely the best at what he does.

(Bill, project manager, 25-34)

Ian Dempsey is very good. He is so all encompassing; he has such a wide listenership. I would know a lot of people who would listen to him in the morning. Either, because he makes them feel good, or a makes them laugh and it is just like, good up-beat stuff. And the news

would be good too on Today FM. Dunphy is good but he's never there, he is always on holidays. I think Dunphy is a good presenter. I think he's got a good approach. He is not answerable to anybody.

(Sophie, administrator, 25-34)

The above statement indicates that some presenters appeal on some levels but not on all. Style and approach seem to matter a lot for the presenter to achieve a total connection with the listener. Others mentioned individual news and current-affairs presenters as being 'interesting', 'intelligent' or that they have a 'nice manner'. Another presenter was noted because he was 'controversial' and because 'he gets people going'.

Presenters are seen as having more prestige and authority than their daytime DJ colleagues. In contrast to the DJs who were seen as somewhat vacuous and limited in the scope afforded by their stations, the national presenter however, encapsulates a fully rounded, 'real' person with more scope to display their talent and attraction. Ian Dempsey - once an RTE children's television presenter - has made the transition from being regarded as a DJ to a presenter, able to fulfil his audience's expectations of providing a consistent, upbeat, 'feel-good' show with a personality able to adapt to changing trends. RTE DJs like Ronan Collins who presented a music programme, were seen as providing an escape from the harsh realities of the listener's home or work-a-day world and provided a period of convivial company with good music. It's no accident that Ronan Collins' music show fits in between two hard-nosed current-

affairs programmes. In terms of current-affairs, Marion Finucane is regarded as performing for the 'ordinary' listener; putting the hard question, holding interviewees to account and voice an opinion that the man/women-in-the-street would want voiced.

Presenters were seen as being both a filter (content and scope) and facilitator (acting in the interest of the listener). One participant recalled a time when Mike Murphy presented The Arts Show in the afternoon and commented that he 'made the arts accessible and interesting to the ordinary listener'.

The appeal of RTE Radio 1 over that of other stations

I felt it appropriate in the interview schedule to direct my questions more specifically towards RTE and then hone in later on perceptions and knowledge concerning the public service broadcaster, RTE Radio 1. After discussing the role of the presenter, what was RTE Radio 1's appeal over the competition? Responses highlighted programme characteristics or style elements of the station and the participants excluded any named personalities from their answers. RTE Radio 1, for instance, appears to be the first choice for national news.

I tend to maybe listen to RTE because of its news content and ability to deal with serious issues I suppose.

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

I just feel it's a very broad, they just cover such a wide range of topics that I would find of great interest and they cover topics that I feel are of great importance in Ireland that aren't covered on the other radio stations.

(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

Younger participants suggested that if you wanted music, they would tune to another station. Other stations were perceived to deal with only trivial items and being 'hit and miss' in terms of a professional sound. RTE Radio 1, on the other hand, had built up a solid heritage and its presenters were described as being very familiar.

RTE, they give a decent bit of time to an issue so you get some analysis there, decent analysis, secondly that they have a standing as in you can generally trust what RTE come out with.

(Paul, lecturer, 45-54)

In general, the content was seen as more varied with more opinions and the coverage of news and current affairs was regarded as being superior to all other radio stations. However, younger listeners saw the image of the stations as 'still old Ireland and that'.

I like the tone of it, I like the chats. (Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

They just appeal to the kind of thing I

like to listen to I suppose. (Mary, librarian, 55-64)

You get a full rounded story - so they're pretty
good in that respect so that would be the main thing. (Paul, lecturer,
45-54)

What they are providing is information
that really isn't anywhere else. It's definitely
not on today FM. (Ashley, manager, 35-44)

RTE Radio 1 has made a personal connection with listeners and time has made it into
a heritage brand – always there.

There is still a bit of loyalty there I suppose. Like we were saying
earlier, what you used to listen to years ago. I have reverted back
listening to RTE radio 1 at the start and end of the day, it still there. You
would definitely miss it if it wasn't there. Though, having NewsTalk,
has helped a bit. But maybe, maybe [sic] it's just format that you have
ingrained on you from when you listened as a child?
(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

RTE Radio 1, according to respondents, has been successfully turned into a 'brand'
and audiences, that on growing into middle age they find increasingly appealing and

characterised by a high degree of trust in RTE Radio 1 as an independent, credible source of news and information.

The RTE Presenter and the context of change

I had initially separated out the title ‘DJ’ from ‘presenter’ in my interview schedule with participants to see if there was any perceived difference between the two. It was noted above that all the participants listened to music radio during their teenage years. The DJ would perhaps have been an influential figure in stimulating the hits with banter and a fair degree of personality. However, can the DJ today occupy such a role or has the role been sub-divided into ‘specialist’ DJ at night and a more banal, even generic DJ during daytime? Moreover, does the influence and tolerance of the DJ diminish over a period of time, as the listener grows older?

They still play music, I mean what does 98FM, say, or 104, back-to-back music for ten minutes, you don’t have anybody listening, there’s no DJs there, they just put on their tracks or whatever. Some of them are a bit cruder now I have to say, I would turn some of them off fairly quickly.

(Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

This comment reveals the nature of ‘branding’ and how it has become a feature of commercial Dublin music stations. Outside the ‘breakfast’ slot, there’s an emphasis on having a ‘tight’ presenter, limited to repeating station ‘IDs’ and phrases along with

scripted links to promote competitions on the station. The thinking is that the station will have a consistent sound that the listener will ‘experience’ at any time of the day (or even night).

Another informant – after a visit to a commercial radio station - expressed her dismay when she realised that a computer play-out system was in use in the on-air studio:

They go in and the list is done for them in the computer! And they get paid for doing the work. I mean anybody who can talk can do what they're doing! There is no input into it. I know a DJ [...] and [he] showed me around for a look - and I was absolutely gutted to see a computer screen and everything all laid out on a computer screen. He said ‘a zombie could do it!’. What's the point in having a computer being a member of the team?

(Ashley, manager, 35-44)

Even though, according to what was discussed earlier, most of the participants said that they perceived music being researched beforehand, some still envisaged that the presenter physically loading up the CD players. However in Dublin, the mix or national and local music stations targeting different age groups presented the listener with a choice that wasn't there back ‘then’.

I'm probably not a good reference point in relation to music radio any more [...] There is a huge difference now, you can hear a whole range of music now that you wouldn't have heard years ago -- so that's something very positive [...]. The range of music that is available now it is markedly different than before. But with regard to what the commercial stations are playing.

(Sophie, administrator, 25-34)

While in the main DJ's were regarded as being more humourous now, quite a few of the participants considered themselves to be getting older and believed that they were getting out of touch.

I don't know, I think maybe it's because I'm getting older, I never seem to know the name of anything any more. And wondering is that the DJ? Because sometimes I really like the music and nobody announced [it] at the beginning and it's definitely not announced at the end. And I go "is there anything or is that just me?" And I think, maybe they did say it? That tends to be on 2FM, or 104, or Spin FM. They probably do it more on 2 FM.

(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

The DJs today seemed to have ceased introducing or 'back-announcing' some of the artists and titles they play. This seems to matter to Laura when she perceives herself

as being older and trying to keep in touch with contemporary popular music whereas the music is probably completely known to the target audience. Presentation style has changed the nature of the DJ, from been remote from the listening audience, to having instant feedback and communication via text and email.

I think it's more proactive now in that I see here the girls have Today FM on quite a lot in work and they engage a lot more with their audience now. They read out emails and texts and stuff.

(Paula, office manager, 25-34)

Tuning to RTE Radio 1, has the presentation approach or style changed noticeably over the years? If so, in what way has the presentation style evolved?

Oh they're totally different from what they were [...] They were so much formal long ago, they were very careful with the way they presented stuff and you know, it's become much more relaxed now.

(Claire, secretary, 55-64)

Claire also suggested that 'back then', the diction and intonation of the presenters was more precise and perhaps delivered in a more affected accent to resemble the clipped BBC accent of the time. One participant's view has changed over time:

I'd listen to John Creedon and he was quite funny. I used to find him quite funny as a kid. I don't know what he used to do, but now I find him quite boring I have to say.

(Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

Now you've got Ryan Tubridy on and he's more lightweight, snappy, but still sort of being informative but in that respect, there is a bit more life about them, but they're still pretty bright.

(Paul, lecturer, 45-54)

In the statement above, Paul acknowledges that today's presenters are seen to have a more engaging, perhaps a less stuffy personality about them. Gay Byrne was seen as a daily institution, a welcome - if sometimes tolerated guest - in the household for over two decades.⁴³ Replacing such a well-established presenter presented its problems and opportunities for controllers to alter the schedule (this is discussed towards the end of this chapter).

⁴³ Gay Byrne had signalled his retirement and RTE initially swapped Marion Finucane from *Liveline* to Byrne's slot and then later moved Ryan Tubridy from 2FM's *Breakfast Show* to do a 10.00am – 11.00am slot

Public Service Broadcasting – Understandings and Perceptions

Public Service Broadcasting – what does it mean?

Respondents were asked what the phrase ‘public service broadcasting’ meant to them.

In the first wave of data collection, almost all expressed a very clear explanation as to how they understood it. Some saw RTE as being the very embodiment of PSB.

Some of the typical responses in the first wave included:

That means RTE to me you know, that’s what I see as public service because yeah that’s what I see it as RTE, either the radio or the television.

(Claire, secretary, 55-64)

Public service broadcasting? I think it means it’s RTE, it’s supported by the taxes or by the licences.

(John, engineer, 45-54)

Others discussed PSB as being ‘independent’ of the state in terms of the supply of objective news and felt that commercial stations might be beholden to sponsors or owners. In terms of programming, others saw it as encompassing minorities and the provision of programming not catered for by the market.

It does mean the same kind of work that we do here, that we should be doing here in terms, you know, there are certain stuff that is not popular, well you're not going to get sponsorship for funding it.
(Barry, economist, 35-44)

Even if there's only a thousand listeners, it's a thousand listeners who enjoy it [...]. They're not ruled by how many listeners they have all the time, prime time maybe yes but after that I don't think they are.
(Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

According to Adrian Moynes, managing director of RTE Radio, PSB is less a theoretical construct than a more day-to-day practical matter. Issues arise day to day, which focus the question. It calls for value judgements and assessments of a concept that operates in an evolving environment.

A clear instance at the moment would be the *Rip Off Republic* series because it raises questions about, in some people's minds anyway about balance, which is not actually a legal requirement of RTE. The requirement is to be impartial and objective and fair to all interests concerned but if you've got a programme like *Rip Off Republic* in which someone is giving an analysis of the economy and public policy from the perspective of the consumer and I suppose by perspective of the citizen and there aren't other voices being heard within that

programme then that's the kind of example of when you start thinking well now does this represent some change in the way we think about public service broadcasting.

(Adrian Moynes, interview with the author)

One of the research participants emphasised this:

In a liberal democratic state like this it means that there's fair balance of views and news and all the rest of it, which is not lead by partisan.

(Paul, lecturer, 45-54)

Balance and objectivity is achieved not on a like with like basis on each programme, but producers aim to achieve it over the programme series or period of time. Indeed, the context in which PSB functions, is constantly changing and needs to be assessed against this. Three of the participants cited PSB as putting out 'messages from the government'. Others elaborated on the cultural and national importance of the concept.

I suppose it means broadcasting with a serious educational and maybe investigative and objective and reflective content as opposed to broadcasting that is playing to a mass market or you know dependent on sponsorship or advertising.

(Mary, librarian, 55-64)

I think the remit of a public broadcasting service is to keep the population informed; to be a forum for the legitimate government to get information out and get feedback; and for citizens to be informed and have a mechanism for feedback. I think it's for it is (sic) for participatory democracy. I think it's absolutely essential.

(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)

It must be again pointed out that most of the participants for this research (as referred to in the Methods chapter) are from a higher socio-economic group and might be better educated. One wonders how those from outside this particular socio-economic group might describe the concept. Other comments remarked on the need to cater for minorities and of RTE 'trying to please all the people, all the time'.

Changing perceptions of PSB

In the years after 2005 - when the above comments were recorded - Ireland underwent an enormous change with a period of rapid economic growth referred to as 'The Celtic Tiger'. This economic boom changed the personal fortunes of a few and the general prosperity of many. The downturn started in 2007, and a dramatic reversal occurred in 2008. With regard to broadcasting, the radio audience was shocked in April 2010 to hear of the untimely death of one of RTE's leading presenters Gerry Ryan. There was further disbelief when the inquest into his death revealed that there had been traces of cocaine in his system, thought by the Coroner

to have been a contributing factor in his death. In the year preceding Ryan's death, newspaper articles had discussed the generous salaries of the RTE presenters and how Gerry Ryan had refused to take his own 'cut'. Then, in 2011 and 2012, RTE suffered two very significant crises in relation to its editorial and journalism standards.⁴⁴ Around this time there had also been major presenter changes to the radio schedules of RTE Radio 1 and 2FM. On RTE Radio 1, Ryan Tubridy had taken over Marian Finucane's programme and Finucane went to the weekends; then Tubridy went back to 2FM to fill the void left in the wake of the much-loved Gerry Ryan. On the economic front, unemployment levels had risen to 14% by 2010. By mid-2011, Irish government bonds were rated as 'junk' and by late-2011, Ireland had entered into a rescue deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM) and secured bilateral loans from the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden to the tune of €85 billion. With such significant events on and off the medium, in addition to the great personal and social change occurring in a wider social and economic context, would the respondents' views on the public service broadcasting concept and RTE Radio be affected or changed in any way since 2005? Therefore, in a second wave of data collection, there appeared to be much greater clarity about what public service broadcasting 'means' to the respondents. There is a marked separation between PSB, as in the supply of a particular type of programmes

⁴⁴ In November 2011 The Irish government initiates an Independent Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Ryan's defamation of Fr Kevin Reynolds following the *Primetime Investigates* programme *Mission to Prey*. In March 2012 The BAI upheld a complaint made by Sean Gallagher relating to a tweet broadcast on the RTE TV programme *Frontline* Presidential debate and on the RTE Radio 1 programme *Today with Pat Kenny* the following day.

with the characteristics of PSB, and the organisation that is RTE. Perhaps with the catastrophic collapse of the economy and the mistrust in the government – either in what it says or its ability to provide solutions to ease the personal burdens – listeners seem to need a trusted news source in times of extreme crisis. Some recall coming across the phrase ‘public service broadcasting’ more in 2012 than in any years previously. There was plenty of exasperation and annoyance expressed over the reported high salaries paid to RTE presenters.

Some of their salaries are outrageous. Is it based on listenership or ratings? At the end of the day, a person is only worth so much [...] Pat Kenny, he’s not doing heart surgery is he? And he’d have lots of researchers doing the work for him. And Marian Finucane is paid so much and she’s only reviewing the papers.

(Paula, office manager, 25-34)

I do think that so few of the presenters have gone over to other stations. And I think that the licence fee has been used to inflate the salaries of the RTE presenters and stop them going to other stations. So in that way, it’s anti-competitive.

(Andrew, Head of Research, 35-44)

While the issue surrounding the RTE television programme *Mission to Prey* from the *Prime Time Investigates* series was commented upon, it was largely regarded as a

‘one-off’ drop in the otherwise high standards of journalism that the respondents had come to expect from RTE. Nonetheless, the almost absolute trust in RTE news and current-affairs expressed in 2005 was now somewhat reduced as illustrated by Fergal:

I still trust them all right apart from the mess they made of the Fr. er
...what’s his name [PH prompts: ‘Reynolds’?] yea Fr. Reynolds mess.
I’d be more sceptical now of their investigative journalism now
alright. That shocked a lot of people that their journalism was so bad
there in that case. But I’d trust them ninety percent.
(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54

Other comments expressed, related to the lack of appeal for Ryan Tubridy, the current presenter of the RTE television programme *The Late, Late Show* and the presenter that took over the old Gerry Ryan slot on 2FM. While discussing the topic ‘what PSB means in 2012, some ‘replenishers’ opined that RTE Radio 1’s programmes were now ‘more boring’ than the offerings from rival station NewsTalk’s. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Funding PSB – a model based on fairness?

In the first wave of data collection in 2005, the author judged it best to approach the topic of PSB in a straightforward, pragmatic way. All contributors would be aware that they, or perhaps someone in their household, is legally obliged to pay an annual TV Licence that goes to support the funding of services of RTE. Would they agree

that it's fair? The participants gave very considered answers and brought up wider issues pertaining to the concept itself.

We're kind of paying for it like, but yeah I suppose maybe it would be fair to kind of share the money around to the other stations or whatever like that and I don't know it might put pressure on RTE to kind of come up with a better standard.

(Conor, computer technician, 25-34)

No, I don't think they should be given any sort of advantage when they're not doing anything different to anyone else.

(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

Conor's statement views the fee as a type of tax and that allocating some of the fund to others, might cause RTE to 'up its game'. While Ian, one of the youngest participants and not a regular listener to RTE sees the station as having an unfair advantage for providing a service not too dissimilar to the commercial stations that he enjoys. About forty percent of the interviewees expressed an opinion that it wasn't fair for RTE to retain the full amount. Still, the majority thought that it was fair.

I think probably everybody should be competing on the same level. And maybe you should pay an annual fee that is dispersed. I certainly don't think RTE should be molycoddled over the other stations.

(Ashley, manager, 35-44)

You do get the feeling of a monopoly and that they are allowed to have this licence fee and advertising. I mean the BBC have their licence fee and then there's no advertising. So, why do RTE have both?

(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

Some thought that because there was 'more choice' available nowadays, that this fact alone made it unfair. As can be seen from Laura's comment, participants are unaware of the differences in scale between the UK and Ireland and how this distorts the true picture; they see RTE as having the 'best of both worlds', the licence fee and advertising revenue. What is interesting too, is when participants gave a view and the researcher offered a clarification or qualification on what they had said. The following two examples demonstrate this:

Not really, no. Sure they're all providing a service and just because RTE was there first, doesn't mean it's fair. I think they're as much entitled to their portion of the licence as everyone else. How's the licence broken up?

(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

Q At the moment RTE gets the entire...

Well there should be a percentage allocation because Today FM is definitely in my age group and down, and is definitely entertaining a high portion of the Irish population.

(Paula, office manager, 25-34)

I never like the idea of RTE getting all the money from the licence fees or whatever and I never liked it for TV or radio. I just feel that other people are entitled to their share of it. Now that is my belief in that.

(John, engineer, 45-54)

Q So, just to tease that out then. Just say other people were getting it, would it diminish what RTE was doing, what they could do?

Now that I suppose, the honest answer is 'yes' it would diminish the quality of programme that they're putting on because they need the resource to put on the quality of programme, the programme that I kind of enjoy and there's a lot of research going in there which is an awful lot more research goes in there I would have thought than in the other stations. The other stations are only turning over the records so I suppose if you level the playing field the other ones will rise a fraction. RTE will suffer a lot, they'll suffer a fraction that the other ones rise and yes I suppose when you put it that way.

(John, engineer, 45-54)

Paula who was a listener who once to listened to 2FM and has since moved to Today FM, sees no reason as to why Today FM shouldn't be given some allocation of the licence fee, while John's initial view is completely turned around when he ponders his own rationale. Others had considered the wider context of public service broadcasting and its importance in cultural and national affairs, conscious that it has to cover and cater for the whole of Ireland and provide shows that the commercial sector wouldn't provide. Others expressed that in terms of 'trust' that you needed a well-founded state broadcaster, a point emphasised by Sarah:

Yes, I think the state should have a licence-based wavelength. I think one of the biggest dangers in any democracy is having the airwaves dominated by commerce, or enterprise or political parties with fundamental ideas. I think the key to any democracy is, free radio, free press. I think that if you didn't have that....

(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)

A large proportion of answers amplified how some of the participants feel that a national state broadcaster should be funded to a level to ensure a trusted provision of news and a service that is capable of servicing the entire community. Still there is ambiguity surrounding the precise purpose and breakdown of the licence fee.

Sharing the purse - licence fee distribution?

The question, *‘what would you think if the other non-RTE stations were to be given or were allocated funding from the licence fee, if they were to put on the types of programmes that RTE Radio puts on?’* was first put to respondents in 2005, before it was publically mooted that the Broadcast Commission of Ireland (BCI) later to be replaced by the Broadcast Authority of Ireland (BAI) was to launch the Sound & Vision Scheme (S&V Scheme). It might be necessary to provide some background context to the S&V scheme. The Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 was enacted on 23rd December 2003. However, the EU only finally gave the Scheme the ‘green light’ in October 2005. Between the years 2006 and 2010, the Sound & Vision Scheme has allocated over €6.5 million to radio programmes, produced for Public, Commercial, Local and Community radio⁴⁵. The fund is derived from a ‘top slice’ of the RTE TV Licence Fee. In 2009, the amount top-sliced from the licence fee increased from its initial percentage of 5 percent to 7 percent of the RTE Licence Fee revenue.⁴⁶

Therefore, respondents in 2005 had not been aware that the licence fee was to be ‘top-sliced’ and that 5 percent would be diverted to the Sound & Vision Scheme. Moreover, respondents may not have been aware that the allocation might be a single figure percentage and may have thought that ‘sharing the licence fee’ might involve a wholesale carve-up of the licence fee! What’s important for this discussion is the general principle of diverting monies from RTE or the public purse to other broadcasters.

⁴⁵ Source: BAI/BCI press releases.

⁴⁶ For a comprehensive guide to the BAI’s S & V Scheme please see <http://www.bai.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Broadcasting-Funding-Scheme-scheme-doc.pdf> [accessed 16.08.2011]

Of all the questions asked in 2005, this was the one that surprised them most and all mused out loud about the implications for and against the suggestion. What was the respondents' opinion on other non-RTE stations getting access to licence fee revenue if they were produce programmes of a PSB ethos or nature? Typical is the response below where the interviewee thought aloud.

So I don't know. So would I have any problem that NewsTalk, in other words, the licence fee is buying airtime and it can be on RTE or it can be on News Talk or it can be on Today FM. Why does my licence, I'm buying air time, I'm buying cultural programmes, why can't I listen to the cultural programmes on the News Talk or why can't I listen to them on Today FM, why should it only be RTE 1. A good question?

(Andrew, Head of Research, 35-44)

That's a hard question. Well if they put on Pat Kenny type shows and Gerry Ryan shows, no. If they put on shows that you know fulfil public service criteria I think 'yes' they should be and I think that would be good discipline on RTE and I think there should be an independent producers clause in there like there is I think now for RTE but all the independent producers seem to be ex employees of RTE.

So yes I do. I think RTE is failing rapidly in terms of the public service.

(Barry, economist, 35-44)

Barry thought that if RTE was not providing genuine PSB type programming and that RTE Radio 1 was a 'half-commercial' station anyway then he'd be in favour if independent producers could supply and produce it. Although another who had been negative about RTE's programming and approach above, nevertheless defended it against having a reduction imposed on it further citing an unequal comparison between UK and Ireland's respective populations. Other participants, who were in favour of funding for non-RTE stations, worried if such a move might dumb down the existing RTE Radio 1 service. Some felt that if other stations produced programmes, that the quality might in fact improve and be 'less boring' and perhaps that there might be less need for advertising.

I think they should be entitled to the fee. Absolutely. But they shouldn't be entitled to fee for just play a run of songs. And it could work that they wouldn't have to play as much advertising, if they were getting [a] fee and it would have more space for just a more education for the young people listening.

(Ashley, manager, 35-44)

Most were not aware that a well-researched music show could be in fact be regarded as public service programming when well executed, with the songs presented in context with specialist knowledge underpinning the presentation (Hendy, 2000a; Wall & Dubber, 2009).

PSB funding model – changes in opinion

It might be presumed that the respondents - now that they are living in far more straitened times - would be against paying for a TV Licence. Apparently, not so. In fact, some of the younger respondents, who didn't support RTE radio very much when they were younger, have now reversed their views seven years on. While their loyalties might now rest more with NewsTalk 106FM than RTE radio in general, they are, surprisingly enough, prepared to pay for the provision of public service broadcasting. While PSB and RTE were somewhat synonymous in the views expressed in 2005, now in 2012 with perceptions revisited, there appears to be a marked degree of separation between the two - RTE the organisation and PSB, the programmes and ethos underpinning the concept. An example from Caroline who suggests that the licence fee is to be expected but should be shared and demands better quality and higher standards from RTE:

No, Definitely not. I've no problem paying the licence fee, it's pittance in terms of my annual bills, it's money well spent. I would prefer to think that those radio stations that I actually listen to would get a portion of my licence fee for their use.

PH: – Would that diminish what RTE is trying to do?

I don't see how they can go be any worse. I refute the point that they give high quality 'anything' at this stage. Private providers are matching them on quality at this stage, if not surpassing them.
(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)

However, sharing it with other stations, for some, was seen as diluting and compromising RTE's efforts but again, the annoyance with the enormous salaries paid out to the presenters.

I actually think it would be diluted if they started getting that sort of challenge. But I have to say that I have a huge problem with what the RTE people are paid. I really do. It should have integrity and I really think that the salaries are disgusting.
(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

It was interesting to remind a respondent of his exact quote from 2005 of how at that time he was dead against RTE getting public funding and now, seven years on, he is more supportive RTE getting the licence fee.

*PH: "If I was to meet a guy seven years younger than you are now.
And he said that he doesn't listen to RTE and he'd say 'why should I*

*pay for the Licence Fee?’ – just like you said to me, seven years ago.
What would you say to that guy, now?’*

I can absolutely see where he’s coming from but I’m just wondering if there’s a better way? It’s a substantial charge. But I can [now] also see that RTE is sinking a lot of money into the player and the website and that wouldn’t be cheap.

(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

There was a large swing to support ‘some’ sharing of the licence fee. There was also a consensus that public service broadcasting should be funded and a feeling that there might be ‘a better way’, although what the mechanism might be was not pinpointed. One felt that the licence fee was an outdated method and that the money should go into a fund and that whoever wanted to provide public service broadcasting could apply to do so from this fund. Another likened it to the railways in the UK where the government owned the track and others provided the trains and service. There was also a distinction expressed between what was regarded as city ‘music stations’ getting public funding and ‘genuine’ local stations who would be deemed to be more deserving of it. It is worth bearing in mind that this is a survey connecting with a Dublin audience and any similar set of questions with an audience from a different county might demonstrate a larger degree of support in favour of ‘Home Local’ and against RTE radio. Nevertheless, there has been a diminution in the almost unblemished reputation of RTE as expressed by the respondents in 2005 compared

with that of their views expressed in 2012 brought about it would seem as a result of the major editorial mishaps of RTE's journalism in recent times but by the negative publicity concerning the extravagant salaries paid to its presenters, who are now viewed as being 'out of touch' with the day-to-day realities of the majority of their listeners.

Irish independent-commercial radio sector requests public funding for PSB

Since the first wave of the data collection in 2005, the body representing the independent-commercial radio sector, the Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI) has called on the Government for financial support to fund the provision of public service broadcasting on independent commercial stations. The IBI represents two national stations (Today FM and NewsTalk 106FM), one multi-city radio station (4FM), four regional stations and 27 local radio stations. In July 2012, the IBI launched a Policy Document '*Creating a fair broadcasting sector that serves the whole community*' which called for formal recognition in respect of the provision of PSB on IBI member stations.⁴⁷ The IBI also calls for a new fund to support and develop public service broadcasting on independent-commercial radio; funding for the BAI to come from the new universal Broadcast Charge instead of a levy on its members; and an amendment to Section 108 of the 2009 Broadcasting Act to define and constrain the commercial mandate of RTE. Currently under Section 108 of the 2009 Broadcasting Act, RTE is obliged '(a) to be operated in an efficient manner so

⁴⁷ Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (2012), *Creating a fair broadcasting sector that serves the whole community; Policy on the funding of independent commercial radio in Ireland*. (source) : <http://www.ibireland.ie/policy/> [accessed date 10th October 2012]

as to maximise revenues...⁴⁸ The IBI believes that this clause compels RTE to be more commercially driven than it needs be. With regard to the programming output, IBI believes that RTE in the main ‘does a good job’, however, it has problems with the Ronan Collin’s (music shows) on RTE Radio 1 ‘being considered as public service broadcasting’. Moreover, the IBI views the PSB output of 2FM as being no different to the types of shows that independent stations provide. RTE on the other hand would argue that 2FM has never sought or taken any licence fee money and has instead been operated as a standalone commercial entity within the RTE organisation. This then begs the further question as to whether 2FM should be forced to be more distinctive as against being competitively popular? Granted some of its night-time output is more specialist, but so too was BBC Radio 1 before it was refashioned into a fit-for-purpose PSB youth broadcaster.

Broadcast Charge – replacing the TV Licence Fee?

In January 2012, the Minister for Communications Pat Rabbitte announced that he was proposing to replace the TV Licence Fee with an annual Broadcast Charge. The potential reduction in evasion and greater efficiencies in collection would in the opinion of the IBI provide an estimated ‘uplift’ of between €30 million - € 40 million extra.⁴⁹ This is something that RTE and the independent-commercial sector would both welcome – access to an additional source of finance. The Programme for Government for the Coalition Government of Fine Gael and Labour contained a commitment to review funding for public and independent broadcasters and the IBI

⁴⁸ Broadcasting Act 2009, Section 108 (1) p 109

⁴⁹ Lisa Ní Choisdealbha, Executive Director, IBI, interviewed by the author, 23rd November 2012.

now hopes that it can convince the Minister that a substantial proportion of the broadcast charge might be diverted to independent-commercial radio. IBI argues that its member stations could provide additional and far greater sports and current-affairs coverage than is currently on-air at present. However, in response to a Dáil question by Independent TD John Halligan on the proposed broadcast charge, Minister Rabbitte said that independent stations were founded as commercial enterprises ‘with the profit motive as their primary objective’.⁵⁰ This statement signals that the IBI might have a serious battle in trying to convince the minister to look favourably on the IBI’s proposals regarding the broadcast charge.⁵¹

Newspapers and radio stations continue to reduce their respective workforce outlets continue to reduce employee numbers, RTE has lost 402 staff or 20 percent of its workforce and has cut its costs by €91 million compared to 2008. Some commentators privately express the view that there is a very real danger of an independent, commercial station ‘going under’ as a result of the current bleak advertising market. Perhaps, even more embarrassing for the BAI would be a radio operator handing back its licence to the Authority, an event that marked a turning point in the UK when in 2006, UKRD which operated station Star 107.9 shocked the radio sector and Ofcom when it handed-back its licence for Stroud, Gloucestershire.

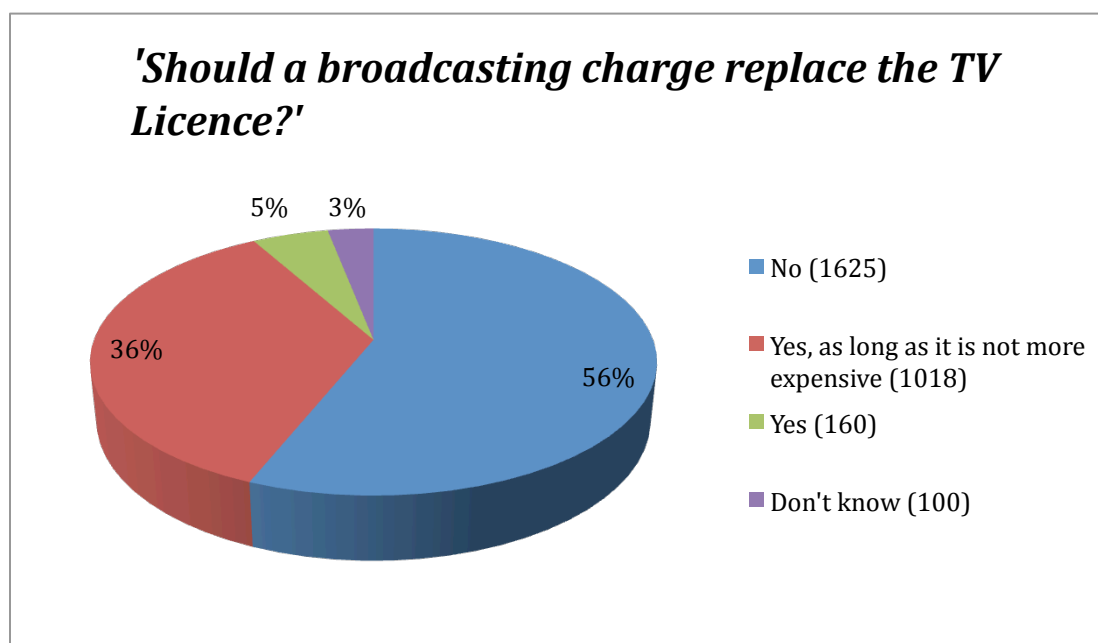
⁵⁰ ‘Local radio funding debate gets new airing’ by Laura Slattery in The Irish Times, 6th December 2012 <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/finance/2012/1206/1224327549724.html> [accessed 27th December 2012]

⁵¹ The previous Minister for Communications, Green Party TD Eamon Ryan - who first mooted the idea of a universal broadcast charge – seemed to more open to the suggestion of considering sharing the charge, not with independent radio per se but with newspaper newsrooms who claimed to be in direct competition with RTE in the online domain.

Thereafter, the regulator attempted to accommodate wide-ranging changes to commercial radio licence agreements (Starkey, 2011: 153-154).⁵²

In January 2012, the Irish online news website The Journal asked its readers to respond to a poll in connection with the minister's view that the TV Licence Fee would be replaced by a Broadcast Charge to more reflect the growing nature of online viewing and listening via computers and other devices. The poll attracted 2,903 online votes.⁵³

Fig 5.0 Should a broadcasting charge replace the TV Licence fee? (source: The Journal.ie)



⁵² The Broadcast Commission of Ireland (BCI), the forerunner to the BCI adopted a blind eye when Radio Ireland was suffering a difficult start-up period in 1995. The Commission didn't want another national radio station to collapse in the wake of the short-lived Century Radio (1989-1991). Over a relatively short period, Radio Ireland jessitioned many shows and format commitments as it sought to gain appeal in a challenging market place; it then changed its name to Today FM.

⁵³ <http://www.thejournal.ie/poll-should-a-broadcasting-charge-replace-the-tv-licence-331613-Jan2012/>
The Journal online poll [accessed date: 24th December 2012]

Fig 5.0 reveals the results of the preferences of a poll of The Journal's online readers in relation to a stated commitment from Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources that he is planning to replace the TV Licence Fee with a more 'modern and effective' broadcasting charge. The majority of those taking part, 56 percent, would prefer that the status quo remained, perhaps fearing that the proposed new charge would be increased in the process. Many of the comments posted in response to the survey remarked that they 'don't watch RTE and therefore shouldn't have to pay for it at all'. Other comments said that RTE should become 'subscription-based for anyone who wanted it', while another believed that if RTE was really concerned about people accessing its websites for free then they should make it for subscribers only, 'like Sky's website'. Many offered the suggestion that the cable provider UPC should be able to block out 'on request' anyone who did want to pay for any RTE channels. The comments overwhelmingly commented on the 'stars' inflated salaries and that the licence fee, currently €160, was too much as it was and therefore should even be reduced! A sizable minority, 36 percent, voted in favour of a broadcasting charge to replace the TV Licence Fee with some comments comparing the provision of public service broadcasting with that of people without children who taxes are still used to fund schools and services that they won't need or use.

Broadcast Funding Scheme (S&V II), listener awareness and licence fee expenditure

The Broadcasting Fund Scheme⁵⁴, then called The Sound and Vision Scheme was in the process of being rolled-out when the initial wave of data collection took place in 2005. At the second point of data collection, it had been running for seven years.

What is significant is that none of the respondents expressed any awareness of the scheme. When informed about the operation of the fund, respondents suggested that they were indeed more open to ‘sharing’ public monies with other broadcasters and in this sense they opined that the notion of the S&V Scheme or Broadcasting Funding Scheme as it is also known, was a positive development. One respondent suggested that if any such scheme were operated by a semi-state body, then it would probably have been ‘designed to be bureaucratic and complicated to keep stations from making successful applications!’ Just how has fund been allocated and what radio sectors have benefited most from it?

⁵⁴ The Broadcasting Funding Scheme (Sound & Vision II) was established to provide funding in support of high quality programmes on Irish culture, heritage and experience, and programmes to improve adult literacy. The Broadcasting Act, 2009 extended the scheme to offer funding towards programmes dealing with the themes of media literacy and global affairs. The Act also increased the percentage level of funding for the Scheme via the television licence fee to 7%. The revised scheme incorporating these amendments is now operational (source BAI).

Fig 5.1 Sound & Vision funding, allocation of Television and radio grant amounts (source: BAI)

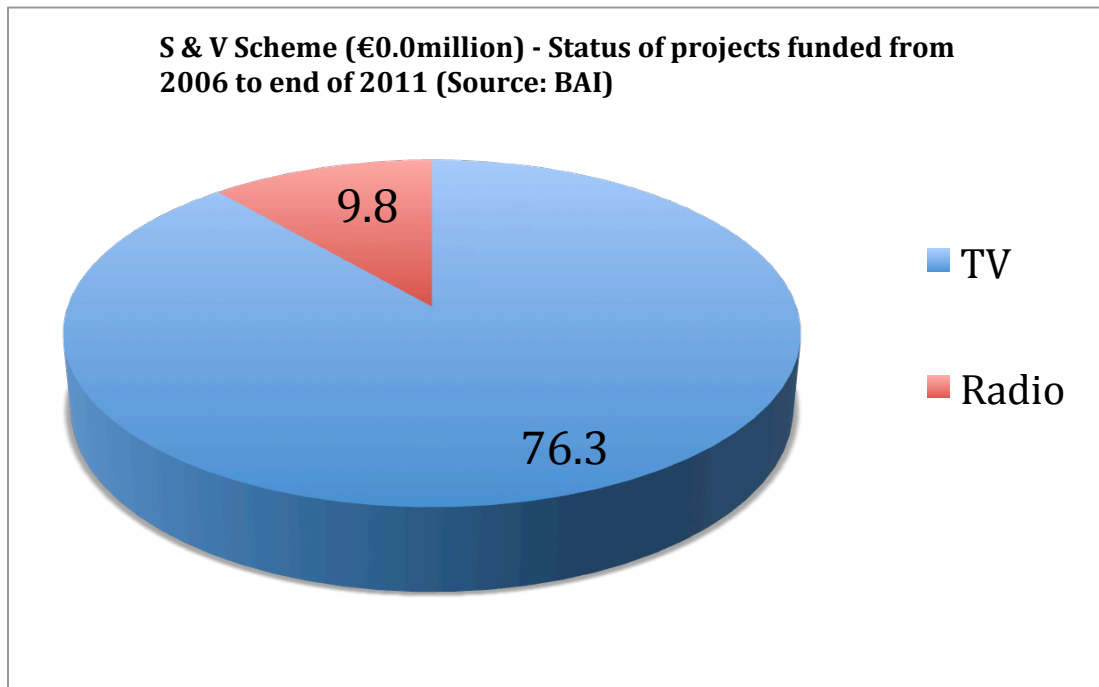


Figure 5.1 above details the allocation of the S&V Scheme up to the end of 2011. Radio projects accounted for 10 percent of the total funding or €9.8 million, whereas television projects received 90 percent or €76.3 million. According to analysis from the Association of Independent Radio Producers of Ireland (AIRPI), the funding from the Scheme for independent radio production equates to approximately €4,500 per documentary broadcast hour. This represents a reduction of 22 percent when compared to the average of €5,800 that was awarded in Round 1 in 2006 and presents a acute situation to some independent producers striving to keep afloat with reduced budgets.⁵⁵

In terms of the individual radio sectors, Figure 5.2 reveals the breakdown.

⁵⁵ AIRPI/Aisling O'Connor (2012): *An Analysis of the Radio Grants Awarded in Sound & Vision Radio Rounds 1 -12*.

Fig 5.2 Sound & Vision Scheme, funding by service type (source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General)

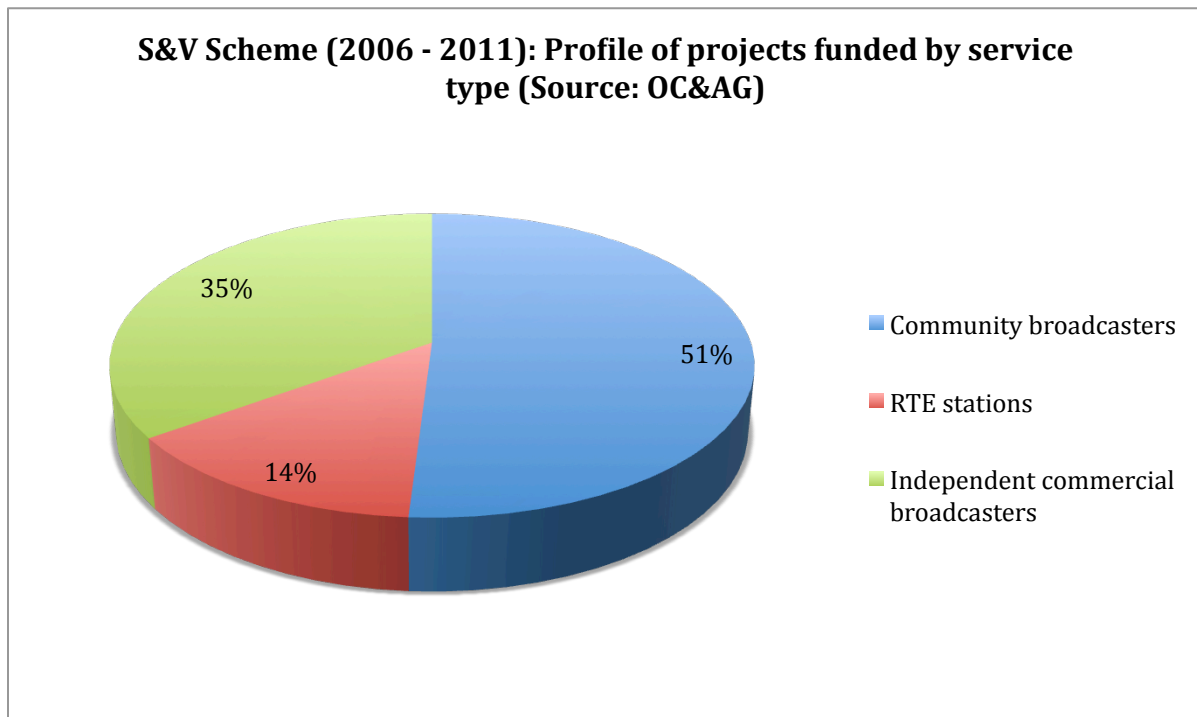


Fig 5.2 provides an interesting breakdown of service types and the allocation of grants to each radio sector. By far the largest allocation of almost €5.0 million went to the Community Radio sector, with Independent-commercial stations receiving €3.43 million and RTE receiving €1.37 million.

The Independent-commercial sector regards the scheme as being ‘fundamentally flawed’.⁵⁶ Echoing what one respondent said above, the IBI believes that the application process is very onerous with projects ‘rejected on the slightest technicality’. Moreover, the rules of the scheme preclude any political or current-affairs programming and so independent-commercial stations have tended to focus

⁵⁶ Lisa Ní Choisdealbha, Executive Director, IBI, interviewed by the author, 23rd November 2012

their applications on documentary features. A review of the now so-called Broadcasting Fund is under way and the Association of Independent Radio Producers of Ireland (AIRPI) along with IBI is calling for a more streamlined and less complicated application process. A review of the Sound & Vision Scheme to date by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has recommended a number of changes to the operation of the Scheme. It has also called for a more considered assessment to review the type and genre of programmes commissioned. In addition, it has requested that the quality of finished programmes be assessed.⁵⁷

RTE 2FM and the need to maintain popularity

2FM began transmission in 1979 as a youth focused music broadcaster from RTE as a national alternative to the scores of pirate radio stations that had sprung up in all major cities and some large towns (Horgan, 2001; Mulryan, 1988). However, in the intervening years, the initial target audience has changed due in part to the initial listening audience growing older with the station, and the high popularity of its main mid-morning presenter, the late Gerry Ryan. Ryan's ability - while doing tabloid talk radio - to attract advertisers resulted in the station becoming a 'cash cow'. This meant that 2FM didn't require the station to be supported by the licence fee and in some years, produced a surplus for the larger organisation. For example in the financial year ended 2007, 2FM took in over €18.2 million in advertising revenue and

⁵⁷ Source: Comptroller and Auditor General
<http://www.audgen.gov.ie/documents/annualreports/2011/report/en/Chapter20.pdf> [accessed 23rd December 2012].

returned a surplus of €4.08 million.⁵⁸ However, this contrasts sharply with the financial year ended 2011; in that year, the station took in just over €7 million in advertising revenue and recorded a deficit of €5.39 million.⁵⁹

The criticism has been made by the Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI), among others, that the station is uninterested in providing any meaningful PSB content.

However, this charge has been rejected by RTE who point out to 2FM's diverse night-time schedule. RTE, in the past, also argued that Gerry Ryan's style enabled a range of relevant topics to be discussed and addressed to an audience that ordinarily wouldn't listen to RTE Radio 1. RTE stated that 'that's the reality as long as Gerry Ryan has been doing his show' suggests that the scheduled revolved around the host's very popular show.

Independent-commercial station Today FM began as Radio Ireland on 17th March 1997 and was referred to as a 'full service' station whose stated aim was to compete head-to-head with RTE Radio 1 (not 2FM as is now more the case). However, difficult trading conditions, a large production staff and a schedule with new and unfamiliar presenters resulted in the station management performing an 'about turn' on the ambitious programming. And within just one year after launching, the station rebranded as Today FM commenced a mainly music-driven format with the

⁵⁸ Source: RTE Annual Report 2007 (in this financial year, the RTE Group accounts show a healthy €26.4 million surplus).

⁵⁹ Source: RTE Annual Report 2011 (in this financial year, RTE group recorded a deficit of €16.7 million)

exception of a drive-time current-affairs show and a mid-morning light magazine programme hosted by Ray Darcy a former RTE TV children's presenter.

Over the past ten years, both stations have been seen as largely competing for a similar audience.⁶⁰ It must be stressed here that being popular should not be considered as being in any way detrimental to the image, mission or ethos of a public radio station. However, being distinct and different should be a prerequisite for the programming output of a public broadcaster. It was necessary to enquire from the audience about their perceptions of the differences – if any – between the two stations. Moreover, would their answers highlight any awareness of aspects of PSB on 2FM?

National music radio – perceiving dissimilarity between 2FM and Today FM

When questioned about the role of music broadcaster 2FM, there was a general perception from the listeners surveyed of 'sameness' between it and the national commercial rival Today FM. It is worth noting that the in-depth interviews in the first wave of data collection in respect of presenters preceded the sudden death of 2FM's larger-than-life presenter, Gerry Ryan. It was he who was seen as the main point of difference between the two stations – a larger-than-life personality whose show commanded a large audience. Often, when new audience figures were announced, the newspapers compared the two audiences and their 'rival' presenters. The participants for this research certainly viewed them as 'head-to-head'

⁶⁰ Following the death of broadcaster Gerry Ryan in April 2010, 2FM's mid-morning audience fell by more than a third. The economic downturn has also seen 2FM record a deficit in revenue for the three subsequent years.

competition, with Ryan taking a commanding lead (a situation that has turned full circle in favour of Today FM).

I'm not surrounded by 15 to 25 -year-olds so I don't know what their feelings are on it. I don't know if 2FM would cater for their tastes.
(Sophie, administrator, 25-34)

To me they both seemed to be aimed at around the same sort age group. I wouldn't have said there's a huge difference between them. Today FM definitely seem to have better presenters, I know they've pinched presenters like Ray Darcy and Ian Dempsey from RTE so I'm assuming they've got more money behind them.
(Ian, computer programmer, 25-34)

The above comments are typical of the opinion from the twenty-one informants, showing very little difference separating the two stations; moreover, nearly all thought Today FM to be a more vibrant station with a better music selection. The above opinions were from the younger demographics of the data set. Three of the four oldest informants said they don't listen to 2FM and offered no opinion. Only one claimed to have listened. So, in terms of public service broadcasting, would the respondents be able to distinguish any PSB characteristics on 2FM?

I probably wouldn't regard it actually as fulfilling the remit of how I would see public service broadcasting and therefore if I was the Minister for Communications I'd probably remove their licence fee (laugh) and make them compete with everyone else.

(Mary, librarian, 55-64)

Mary followed this up with the following 'I mean, I know Today FM started off with pretending it was going to do a hell a lot more news than it did but I still think it does some newsy things that I would look at it for'. So, she was conscious that Today FM started out as Radio Ireland and had lost some of its shows in order to pursue a more targeted, commercially lucrative, audience. Others thought 2FM was more about 'Gerry's opinion' than any element of public service broadcasting. Again, no PSB function seems to stand out and it appears that 2FM in the peak-time 7.00AM – 7.00PM is not distinctive to the participants in any way that sets it apart *enough* from Today FM.

I don't know. Like they still have the same DJs, they have never changed, the DJs are still presenting the same way they were ten years ago. Like you have Larry Gogan, I know he has changed his slot but he's not changed. They have to realise that Ireland has a very young population. I don't know, it depends what kind of markets they're trying to catch.

(Paula, office manager, 25-34)

It appears that 2FM suffers from a lack of distinct public service provision.⁶¹

Certainly, it's perceived as being no different from its nearest commercial rival Today FM. While the main talk show in the morning, once presented by Gerry Ryan, continues to stand out, the content is viewed as revolving around the presenter. The same crisis appeared to have happened to BBC Radio 1 in the mid-1990s when the BBC Governors deemed it not distinctive enough from its commercial competition. Despite having twenty million listeners, the presenter line-up was largely unchanged from when it began broadcasting in 1969. Mathew Bannister, then Director of Network Radio oversaw a complete change of both music format and on-air talent to reposition the station as a fit-for-purpose and *credible* PSB music broadcaster (Garfield, 1998). BBC seems to emphasise 'quality, reach and distinctiveness' as being central to its mission as a modern public service broadcaster. RTE management is nervous about offering a more distinct service and possibly losing share, with the consequent reaction from public representatives, who will seek justification that RTE is taking the Licence Fee while not retaining the majority audience share.

Back in 2005, 2FM announced that it was repositioning the station to attract an older audience. This was in response to the successful competition from a host of newly licenced regional independent-commercial stations targeting the youth market. No

⁶¹ Other stations stand poised, ready to battle for 'replenishers' to RTE Radio 1 and moreover, its younger stable mate 2FM which ideally should be recruiting these or 'handing them over' when they are mature enough.

audience or public consultation was undertaken by RTE about the repositioning of 2FM, nor was it necessary to consult the Minister with responsibility for broadcasting. Instead, RTE presented its own logic to the decision.

Whatever it [2FM] started out at twenty-six years ago it is operating in a different environment. There are services being specifically licensed by the BCI, this is right and proper, I have no issue with it. They're targeting, people are getting licences on the basis of targeting audiences like that, spend and all the rest of it and good luck to them and they're perfectly right to do it but if we said that 2FM is for 15-24 while all of that is going on we'd be kidding ourselves. It can't be, it no longer has a monopoly of being youth radio in Ireland.

(Adrian Moynes, interview with the author)

The respondents expressed major dissatisfaction with Ryan Tubridy, the presenter who took over the slot once occupied by Gerry Ryan. Anyone taking over this slot might be said to be 'accepting a poisoned chalice' to follow such a popular presenter. When the old presenter was at the helm, the show had literally covered everything 'from the fall of the Third Reich to vaginal secretions [...] the surreal, the prurient, the pornographic, the vile' (Ryan, 2008:137-138). Tubridy's public image was more in tune with that of a bookish 1950s crooner than Gerry Ryan's shock jock approach. Since Tubridy took over the slot, the audience has declined and nationally Tubridy's

show now commands 172,000 listeners compared with Today FM's Ray D'Arcy who has 249,000 listeners.⁶²

RTE Radio – living up to its obligations

After a general series of questions about listening habits and then a very specific set of questions on PSB as it relates to RTE radio, I wanted to find out if RTE, in the opinion of respondents, was fulfilling its PSB obligations. There was a consensus that RTE was just doing 'okay' and maybe not going beyond 'dipping their toe in the water'.

Well I think it's making half-baked attempts at some of it sometimes.

I think they are doing it without really trying to make an effort and I don't think the effort is as much as they should be making.

(Sophie, administrator, 25-34)

I notice they've introduced Irish programmes, completely in Irish at a bad time when I think most people switch off. Now I listen cause I'm fairly good at Irish but even the content of them to me are boring.

(Claire, secretary, 55-64)

There's a sense that even if the programme has a strong PSB element to justify putting it on, the content is presented in a boring manner not likely to attract new listeners and maybe cause listeners who happen across the programming, to tune out.

⁶² (Source) The Irish Times 'RTE listenership increase leaves Tubridy behind' 4th May 2012 <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0504/1224315591528.html> [accessed date: 8/1/2013]

Some respondents thought that while it did provide a diverse range of programmes and fulfil the remit of PSB, they found the programmes particularly uninteresting. One respondent made reference to RTE's suite of national stations and compared the size and scale to BBC's range of national stations and believed that it does live up to its PSB obligations.

I don't think it's possible. I think it's an unbelievably stupid mandate if that is their mandate because they can't. There's so many tastes with the intercultural and diversity that is there now, there's no way they can please everybody at one time. I think they try although I would still argue that RTE Radio 1 and Radio 2 are both moving into a centre domain instead of staying separate into their two identities.
(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)

Some recognised that RTE operated a suite of national stations, which sought to cater for different parts of the audience. In the main, the respondents viewed RTE Radio 1 and in particular, 2FM as being 'mainstream' stations, competing to be popular above all other stations. One participant gave a more penetrating analysis in which she perceived a degree of overlap between Radio 1 and 2FM.

Radio 1 and 2, are, the difference between them from my perspective seems to be less and less all the time and I think that's a shame [...]

This mainstream, kind of, mid position for both of them almost duplicates and therefore, I don't know, kind of dilutes their effect.

(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)

The general feeling was one of little risk-taking occurring, in particular, in the main daytime programming. The participants were aware of the predicament that RTE faced and which was alluded to by Adrian Moynes, namely that of losing audience 'share' *ergo* advertising revenue and the wrath of politicians who might claim that RTE can't justify such a licence fee with a diminished set of audience figures. Perhaps, if listeners were able to be part of a discussion or a topical debate concerning PSB - and its national importance RTE could articulate the case for having more distinct services.

Changing listening patterns: the impact of national independent-commercial competition

With music it is perhaps inevitable that personal tastes will change over time – but what about tastes and listening preferences in radio listening? The initial and more inquiring aspect into personal radio listening for this research project took place in late-2005. Since then, respondents re-interviewed for this project have got married; had their own children (sometimes a few!); changed jobs; and some even manage to retire! Nearly all those re-interviewed in 2012 were the potential and actual 'replenishers'; valuable listeners that might to be recruited – or not as the case may be – to RTE Radio 1.

Apart from the physical and emotional maturing of the individuals, the country suffered catastrophic changes. As described earlier, the Irish economy collapsed; a global crash led on to the deepest of recessions and a programme of fiscal austerity was foisted on the citizens of Ireland as the country was forced to enter an external Programme.

Respondents who were once devotees of music radio had segued to speech radio and moreover, news and current-affairs coverage. In national speech or 'talk' radio, there existed a time when RTE Radio 1 had the 'show' largely to itself; now a new station has arrived and the audience have discovered a bit of spice and verve attributed to the personality of that radio station.

I listen to NewsTalk quite a lot. I guess in the morning when I'm driving in - between 7.15am and 8.17am, that's my commute – that the NewsTalk team are a far more vibrant show, there's a bit of fun coming across the airwaves.
(Caroline, lecturer, 25-34)

I felt a big loss when Gerry Ryan died. I didn't always agree with him, but I liked him. [Newstalk 106FM's] Sean Moncrief is my favourite. He just seems to have his finger on the nation and do a varied and interesting show.
(Natasha, IT manager 25-34)

NewsTalk 106FM is making serious inroads with the replenishers who are engaged with the presenters' personalities and their sometimes biased or controversial opinions. Interestingly, one respondent said that he continued to prefer RTE Radio 1 and disliked Newstalk 106FM in fact he claimed 'I actually hate it. I don't challenge the presenters' intellect, but I don't think they're good broadcasters' (Ashley, manager, 35-44). The important point here is that he acknowledges that others might think that the presenters have some appeal, but not to his particular taste. As was established earlier, listeners who were an innocent set of ears back in their parents' kitchen as children had later described a certain form of long-lost familiarity with the presenters' expression or a 'homeliness' associated with RTE Radio 1 that came back to them when they 'returned' to it later as adults. Lisa, once a PhD student and now working in a busy workplace, fondly remembers that, but more significantly, she has made the switch to Newstalk 106FM:

NewsTalk, I'm a huge Newstalk addict. I still listen to RTE but more to Newstalk. There's appears to be more freedom to opinions being espoused. It would be up there on a par with Radio 1. And it's funny like, Radio 1 would be my alma mater kinda, do you know what I mean?

(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

For a few, the unrelenting 'bad news' actually forced a change from speech radio to music radio or the 'off' switch.

I have to say that I've actually turned off radio a lot since 2005. I've tuned out of news programmes, I find them too depressing. And I find that I listen to Lyric FM more now. I have to say, any station where's there's no news on. I catch up on the news once a day and that would be enough for me.

(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)

My radio listening (and TV watching) has reduced in the last few years. I am totally fed up with the 'spin' out there - budget leaks, etc. I am tending to avoid too much news. I'm listening to RTE Radio 1 a bit on a 'have to' basis. Whereas in the past I would have listened more, I'm now catching up with review programming at weekends.

(Laura, lecturer, 35-44)

A few of the respondents talked about listening to radio 'during the night' as a result of coping with sleeplessness. Another, owing to the personal finances, talked about now having to share one car with his spouse and having to listen to music radio which he has gone off. Some talked about how they now use smart phones and Twitter to keep abreast of the news in a more instantaneous method and then augment that with radio news, if they deem it necessary to follow up. Only one of the respondents used online radio and another used RTE Podcasts 'to catch up' but the majority continue to still prefer to listen live, via FM transmission.

Respondents' final reflections on a much-loved medium

The question schedule began with early associations and memories of the medium. It ended with 'what you like most?' or 'dislike most?' about the medium? It has been demonstrated that the respondents have a deep affection for the medium, ingrained from tradition and further developed with serendipitous music discovery, trust of the programme presenters along with news and current affairs output. Once the habit is formed, it appears a life-long habit. The relationship with the medium is often described as deeply personal but like all relationships, there are likes and dislikes over such a long span of life-long listening.

One respondent regarded the use of text messages in programme content as an 'intrusion' between the presenter and herself, interrupting the flow of the show and therefore her enjoyment and engagement with the programme. Another remarked on another intrusion;

Oh yeah, if there was no commercials at least you can keep the stream going. I think it's awful like you know especially Pat Kenny maybe they're interviewing somebody from another country and he'll have to stop to go for a commercial break and it just cuts off the whole train of thought there.

(Fergal, lab technician, 45-54)

What is considered 'mindless prattle' with music DJs was a turn off with some respondents. Another irritation is when programme panellists talk over each other.

One of the younger respondents is of a generation who ‘fillets’ his own music by way of downloads and listening to specialist music shows by appointment. The sheer convenience of being able to do that now compared to an age before the Internet, iTunes and ‘listen again’ facilities and moreover, the portable MP3 player such as the iPod makes this an attractive proposition for younger listeners. The use of playlists and the repetition of ‘hot’ tracks turns him off radio (Hendy, 2000b).

It’s just that everything’s planned. It’s very much of a muchness. The same like. I know you’ll get the odd sort of talk radio and that’s in itself that’s good like. Yeah I don’t think it caters for any decent music (laugh).

(Conor, computer technician, 25-34)

Perhaps Ireland is too small to have a music station for connoisseurs’ music such as the BBC’s 6Music. Another older respondent has a corresponding view of the repetition of items of news that are often covered in several programmes across the course of a day. A few respondents reiterated what they actually liked about the medium. Radio’s ability over television as a ‘secondary’ medium, being able to enjoy it while going about other tasks is perhaps one of its strongest appeals along with its primary role as a means of direct and intimate communication, its social role.

I don't dislike it at all, I think it's excellent. I think it made a huge contribution to progress prior to the visual television and Internet. I think it's underestimated, the impact that it has.

(Sarah, lecturer, 55-64)

Radio forms an important link to the 'outside world'; it connects the lonely and isolated to the news and stories of others. One female remarked on the irritating tone of some DJs voices and signalled out one DJ as being 'too true to be wholesome' while another female concluded 'I absolutely hate high-pitched women's voices on the radio. It goes through my head!'. But what if your radio was taken away? What would be missed the most? Most inferred that it would be the 'news and current-affairs' that would cause them to be excluded from the external outside world. One referred to missing 'the snippets of life' that the radio allows. One younger participant said that while he enjoyed having his access to his CD collection in the car, it wasn't as good as being entertained by the radio, which helped relieve the boredom of long-distant journeys. Indeed, it was stated that the serendipitous nature of programme content, the 'drive-way moment' interviews, the varied music plot on music driven shows, along with the regularity of hourly news and weather, all combined to increase radio's pulling power. Others thought that it helped the lonely.

I would just have this huge gap with reality. My life would be like; getting up in the morning, going to work, going to the gym, there would be no external element or dimension to my life. It would be so

awful. It would be dreadful. I would feel so alone. Radio provides company.

(Ashley, manager, 35-44)

A final speculative question called on the participants to imagine what radio would sound like in ten years' time. On the whole, participants are worried about what might go missing in the change to digital and beyond.

It's hard because I mean one thing I listen to the radio for is that sense of community, that keeping in touch with outside Dublin for instance and the kind of national debate and yet more and more radio is very, my listening is very tailored. I'd say it will be that people will listen to the programmes on iPods or mobiles.

(Barry, economist, 35-44)

Well I would hope that you would still have credible stations that are putting forward, you know, good coverage of current affairs and I would be distraught at the idea that the nation as a whole would be dumbed-down even further.

(Lisa, PhD student, 35-44)

On the one hand radio is seen as spreading its message via a variety of new platforms but will its sense of 'dailyness' disappear? (Scannell, 1996). Many feared for the

diminution in serious news and current-affairs coverage, while one listener, Brian discussed an opportunity that he had yet to personally explore – the wonderful world of Internet radio.

I suppose you could if you wanted to tune into UK channels, maybe that service was there but I certainly wasn't aware of it. Open up opportunities like that really to listen to music that might suit my particular taste rather than kind of mainstream pop music.

(Brian, HR manager, 55-65)

When asked subsequently did he ever get an Internet radio since he uttered the above statement in 2005, Brian replied 'I suppose I got caught up in things and the money went elsewhere'. Of the two younger listeners, one said that while more niche stations might be on the horizon, he guessed that he might, in fact, fall back to what he is familiar with. Since that, he has married and has two children but does hook up an Internet radio device to his HiFi to play 'Radio Paradise'. Another imagined being able to download entire shows to his phone and that there 'would be no huge difference anyway'. Even at this remove from the date of recording the interviews for this research project, it is still not possible to download full versions of music shows due to complex licensing restrictions that necessitates the broadcasters to edit out most of the music. Moreover, prohibitively expensive data costs largely rule out listening to live streams over mobile devices in the way one listens to 'free to air' FM broadcasts. Apart from the 'over paid' RTE presenters and aside from the

apprehension that serious news might become more tabloid together with the minor issues mentioned above, the overall response to this question considered that radio as the current proposition presents itself, as being in rude health and that if the status quo could be maintained then, most would be happy. As one participant put it ‘I hope it sounds as good as it does now!’

Conclusion

The chapter began with a discussion about the early association and exposure to the medium and its programmes, revealing that listeners caught young are likely to become life-long devotees. Public Service Broadcasting was seen as a rather ‘old fashioned’ grandiose term at first with the respondents; but the participants in the research were capable of discussing the complexities and nuances surrounding the concept that is Public Service Broadcasting as it pertains to Ireland with its unique set of circumstances. The discussion in 2005 allowed for an untainted inquiry into the finer points of aspects of presentation – seen here as *the* key to building a successful relationship with the listener. The follow up discussion on the concept of PSB as operated by RTE in 2012 added an extra dimension to the study, building and being able to record how attitudes and opinion had changed. Over the seven years, a change in mood has definitely occurred and RTE’s rival presenters on competing services are judged to articulate a different view in a new and accommodating style which is making steady inroads into the hearts and minds of the up and coming audience. RTE had represented a rather more ‘cosy’ image in 2005. Many external realities have helped change that in 2012.

The most significant contrast between data collection in the years 2005 and 2012 is that respondents are now able to distinguish between Public Service Broadcasting (the concept and ideal) and RTE (the large media organisation). In 2005 participants regarded PSB as being almost synonymous with RTE. The audience are a bit more cynical now because of external events and are therefore more critical of RTE in 2012 than they were in 2005. Looking back, Ireland was almost a different country back in the mid-2000s. In 2008, the late-Gerry Ryan boasted in his best-selling autobiography that the Four Seasons Hotel was his second home and that he and his family loved flying first class to New York, staying in 5-star hotels, and that his family were ‘utterly unfazed by the privilege’ (Ryan, 2008: 82). At the time, Ireland seemed enthralled by actual and rumoured accounts of such wealth. Viewed in hindsight, it was to be this kind of expression, underpinned by the phenomenal RTE salaries that would cause a fracture in the steadfast relationship between a loyal audience and a heritage brand.

There was a time when Radio Luxembourg had a tagline ‘The Station of the Stars’ and the audience quite rightly understood that at the time this referred to the ‘stars’ that were singing on the records being played. RTE Radio was promoted in a similar way over the last decade but in its case, the ‘stars’ referred to were the actual presenters (cross promotion in The RTE Guide added to the allure). Now in 2012, some RTE presenters are viewed by the respondents as ‘not living in the same world as us’.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter concludes this thesis by drawing together some key findings and addressing the research objectives set out in the introduction. In addition, it contains some general observations pertaining to recent developments concerning RTE and developments with public service broadcasting at large.

This study looked at the *history* of PSB. It looked at over a *decade* of audience data.

It took a *snapshot* of audience qualitative opinion in 2005 and compared it with key issues in 2012. It also now discusses some *future* options for RTE. The research presented in this thesis is part of an overall picture and this study as it evolves will form part of that picture.

RTE Radio 1 and its stable mate are in constant competition for audiences against national, local and even community radio. This presents particular dilemmas as they need to maintain a full service of programmes yet remain popular. Listeners in this study recalled that radio helped fill a void during challenging teenage years.

Younger audiences yet to be recruited to radio are now discovering *their* music first online – instantly available and without long intrusive commercial breaks; where once DJs connected with their unseen audience, now potential listeners can connect with friends and strangers via Facebook and other social media. The Swedish online music service, Spotify, recently launched in Ireland and is now another service

looking for a 'share of ear'. In the US, bigger online services like Pandora are fast recruiting would-be recruits away from radio.⁶³ Radio stations are making their websites into great auxiliary portals to the main service, but it is the main over-the-air FM method that still succeeds.

This thesis sought to find out the specific appeal of RTE Radio 1, and in doing so it inquired into the role and approach of RTE's programme presenters and how they attract and keep the audience over time. It also examined how the listener's relationship with the medium changed or matured over time. These questions were framed into four key research objectives.

Research Objective 1: To identify the reasons why RTE Radio 1 attracts and engages listeners and to critically evaluate the literature surrounding some key debates in public service broadcasting and points of interest in the evolution and development of RTE Radio 1.

As described in the research findings above, the distinguishing feature that stands out above all others is RTE's provision of high-quality news and current-affairs coverage. RTE's news is a highly trusted source and is felt by nearly all participants to be a truly 'objective' source. The bulletins and news programmes are viewed as very much as being the backbone of the schedule, upon which other programmes are positioned around. RTE is seen as central to the cultural and social affairs of the

⁶³ Pandora claim that its December 2012 listening numbers are 7.19 percent of total radio listening. Source: Radio Ink 'Pandora continues to take radio listeners' 1st January 2013 <http://www.radioink.com/Article.asp?id=2601932&spid=24698> [accessed date: 10.1.2013]

country. It is viewed as being imbued with notions of heritage and tradition. To regular listeners RTE Radio 1 ‘has a sound’. As one listener remarked, ‘they have a fairly recognisable format all the time, whether it’s even the way they report things, the way they’re scripted on Morning Ireland or at lunchtime, it’s a particular way’. Conversely, this might present a problem in trying to recruit ‘replenishers’ as another younger ‘non-listener’ to RTE suggested that this might represent a ‘stigma’ of ‘old Ireland’.

The ‘Changing fortunes of Public Radio – a review of the literature’ chapter looked at how the medium of radio developed from its invention through to radio’s digital phase. It also marked significant periods in RTE Radio’s evolution, from the eclectic schedules of its early days, through to today and the conflicts and complexities involved with competition for audiences. It was shown how radio as a medium, found its own ‘intimate voice’ and began to forge and stimulate an intimate relationship with its listenership. A significant programme was presented as a case study in social change. It was shown how *The Gay Byrne Show* started to articulate new ideas and examine social and cultural issues. Key debates in public service broadcasting were engaged and analysed. Public service broadcasting definitions and missions were reviewed in the context of the changing environment in which PSB operates. It demonstrated the need for PSB to be distinctive and innovative. It charted how PSB having survived a turbulent periods and attacks over its distinguished development was once again returning to a period of great uncertainty.

Research Objective 2: To explore key issues surrounding the audiences’

perceptions and understandings of RTE Radio 1 and public service broadcasting over a period of time and in particular, to examine the role of the presenter and consider in-depth aspects of presentation and personality.

When asked ‘what does the phrase Public Service Broadcasting mean?’ – the phrase was generally described as being synonymous with RTE and the provision of programmes not supplied by the market. While most claimed that they knew what the ethos of PSB should be, there might have been an element of confusion with the notion of a somewhat under-performing ‘public service’ as the participants held a view that RTE Radio 1 ‘could do better’. In 2005, PSB and RTE were viewed as being almost fused in the same entity. It was further felt that RTE could make more of an effort in living up to its obligations. Even if it did provide the programmes in niche or underserved areas, the presentation and production was described as being somewhat lack-lustre, displaying a lack of innovation or risk-taking.

Notwithstanding the lack of innovation (as observed by the research participants), RTE represents a ‘full service’ schedule and this is part of its appeal and the main point of difference with its commercial competition. It may not be as eclectic as it once was, and in fact may have become too subservient to its ‘branded’ presenters over programme ideas to allow for such innovation. As mentioned by RTE’s managing director of Radio, Adrian Moynes, this always presents a dilemma - the need to be *seen* as popular and to an extent justify taking the licence fee funding.

Therefore, for RTE it is about striking the correct balance between its pursuit of market share and an equal concern with audience ‘reach’.

One of the most overwhelming responses concerned the notion of distributing or sharing the licence fee to other radio broadcasters who could produce or supply public service broadcasting content to their listeners. In 2005, the majority expressed the opinion that it was ‘unfair’ for RTE to keep all the licence fee funding. Even though listeners were in favour of some element of sharing of the licence fee, caution was expressed by some about ‘diluting’ what was seen as RTE’s main purpose, the provision of trusted and objective news and current-affairs coverage. In 2012, there has been a further change in stated opinions as respondents expressed the wish that RTE should continue to be funded despite having been viewed as regarded as been rather injudicious with scarce public monies. More significant in 2012, a far greater majority feel that *some* other radio stations should be considered for public funding too. Namely, as other broadcasters are now seen as doing as ‘good a job’ as RTE radio or indeed sometimes even ‘better’.

RTE has described and promoted its presenters as ‘brands’ around which the programmes are constructed. This has proven to be a commercially successful formula for RTE. During a period of economic boom, it enabled RTE to pay ‘over-the-odds’ to retain its talent and effectively lock them into a ‘golden handcuffs’ deal to prevent them being recruited by any rival station. However, this had occurred at the expense and the requirement to engage and nurture new on-air talent. According to the participants, *second* to the provision of trusted news, is the quality and skill

that the presenters bring to their respective programmes. Presenters have become familiar over the years and listeners remark how the relationship and presentation style has evolved over the years. Presenters now are seen as more ‘human’ and conversational in their approach. As current presenters go, the commercial broadcaster Ray D’Arcy stands out, as being a presenter with particular appeal to ‘replenishers’. Gay Byrne, Ireland’s most famous public broadcaster is remembered in fond terms of deftness in operation and an astute sense of audience focus. This study examined his contribution to RTE at a time of huge social and cultural change. His programme, perhaps more than any others, was regarded as prototypical for the other models that followed in its wake, both on RTE and other stations. Often when discussing programmes, the audience for this research remain oblivious with regard to background researchers and producers who underpin such programmes with their preparedness.

Music presenters are seen as being either generic DJs with little scope for displaying personality and having no input into the music selection or as being actual curators of music with influence on young minds. Some Today FM DJs were viewed as being more skilled in comparison to generic, almost anonymous, DJs who were viewed as being ‘caddie’ for the music format. Ray D’Arcy was seen as top of his games in his presentation and was especially noted for his ability to successfully transition from children’s television presenter to speech radio presenter and bring with him those once young viewers, who were now approaching or were middle-aged. Speech presenters were seen as being both a filter (content and scope) and

facilitator (acting in the interest of the listener). RTE presenters are seen as especially advocating on behalf of the listeners. Marian Finucane was regarded as ‘intelligent, humane, [and] interested herself’. Presenters might appeal on several levels but seldom all. Presenters, such as NewsTalk 106FM’s Sean Moncrieff represented a new breed of presenter, able to cover tabloid and trivia but also ‘get serious’ when the item or story warranted it. This ‘infotainment’ approach - material that is intended to inform and entertain – has created a new category to be added to the three much-noted criteria of public service broadcasting.

As has been described in the Findings, listeners are initially hesitant with new and perhaps unfamiliar voices. However, having a strategy and the programme slots, these voices evolve – albeit slowly - into familiar personalities. Adrian Moynes, managing director of RTE Radio, spoke of schedule change and how it is planned for and it is ‘evolved’ over a long period of time. Change requires the ‘loyalists’ to stay onboard to allow the presenters to become familiar in terms of voice and style. The untimely death of one of its biggest radio ‘stars’ in 2010 exposed RTE’s lack of any such plans. 2 FM was left very exposed having relied on one main ‘star’ to which the station revolved around. It revealed a clear case of a presenter being ‘bigger’ than the actual programme and the aggregate factors that arise in trying to find a suitable presenter to replace a much-loved and popular presenter around which the slot was built. His successor, Ryan Tubridy is seen as being ill-suited to the programme slot. Moreover, the actual *raison d’être* of 2FM in 2012 and any clear PSB mission is seen as absent.

Research Objective 3. To explore the early experiences of users and the socialisation of radio as a medium and to establish if early listening references and impressions have any link to an individual's current listening pattern.

The initial contact with radio as a child was one of respect and reverence, often first occurring in a grandparent's kitchen. The apparatus was mysterious and exciting. Many of the participants remarked that when they were children, it was RTE radio that they had first heard. Moreover, they were able to recall long-gone programmes, signature tunes and catch phrases. In their recollection, there was a general sense of warmth and happy reminiscence. In 2005, there was a remarkable sense that they themselves had matured and were now like their parents in regularly listening to RTE.

However, in contrast to 2005, in 2012, some have felt that they have 'moved on' to other stations while still retaining and acknowledging the warm feeling of 'old-time radio' of the younger years. Back in 2005, that reverence was still glowing. Seven years on, in contrast with the views expressed in 2005, listeners are more functional in the choice of station and presenter, and the special relationship with RTE 'nurtured' by the sound and hue of its presentation over the years has been damaged and lessened as a result of tales of excessive salaries. During the intervening years, they had used music stations to navigate and make sense of their world. Drifting through different radio stations from puberty, coming-of-age, graduation, marriage, midlife, and pre-retirement.

It was seen that radio played a pivotal role as curator of music. This was very much so as the participants recalled the years between fourteen and eighteen-years, when music was very much part of the culture, that is of a particular generation, outside parental influence. The importance of music radio is immense as people remember music in a way that connects with the emotional and personal self, way beyond any other cultural and social stimuli (Levitin, 2006). It was demonstrated that different presenters and stations exist as key ‘providers’ that appeal and connect at key life stages. Listeners, in the main, move through these destinations over time, while being influenced by emotional connections from the past (familiar heritage music). Having older siblings had a direct influence on participants as they recalled being exposed to and then forming an appreciation for music of their older brothers and sisters. Music of coming-of-age years was brought into middle age and became in effect, the soundtrack to one’s life accompanying one into middle age and beyond. Music has such a profound impact, that participants could pinpoint when and where they first heard a favoured track.

In addition, as participants grew to middle age, they began to fondly remember their parents’ music choice and record collections. It was demonstrated that participants who had been ‘exposed’ to light to significant amounts of RTE Radio programming as a child in the company of parents or grandparents would more than likely hold the station in high esteem and return to it in later years; but would no longer feel compelled to stay with RTE exclusively. Participants whose parents had chosen to listen largely to non-RTE stations were more likely to remain non-listeners to RTE

Radio 1 themselves. However, further research is required on a larger scale to test out a possible hypothesis in this regard.

Research Objective 4: To see if some key opinions and perceptions of Public Service Broadcasting can be affected by the passage of time.

The Ireland of 2012 is a vastly different, and in social and economic terms, almost unrecognisable from the country of 2005. In the intervening years, the citizens have witnessed and experienced the rise and fall of the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’; the collapse of the economy; job losses and ‘cut backs’ on an unprecedented scale.

Over that period of time, the participants had learnt that RTE presenters enjoyed enormous salaries and in some cases, individuals appeared reluctant to have them reduced or cut back like they themselves had suffered. This has caused a major rupture of the degree of trust that RTE had – up to that point – enjoyed. In the minds of the audience, the culture of inflated salaries bankers has now been connected with that of the trusted RTE presenters.

The two major failures in journalism that occurred in 2011 in relation to the RTE TV programmes *Frontline*, and the systematic failings exposed in relation to the *Primetime Investigates* programme *Mission to Prey* have largely been seen by the participants as one-off setbacks on RTE’s otherwise unblemished record and service in the provision of trusted news and current affairs. Participants have expressed

large transfer of support to the sharing of *some* portion of licence fee with *some* independent-commercial radio stations. They are also now able to distinguish and articulate difference between RTE (the organisation) and PSB (the concept and ideal). They further expressed the importance of having an independent trusted form of news in times of uncertainty. This expression was more pronounced with the younger participants who are very concerned about the state of the counties and their young families' futures.

The research questions

These research questions were posed with the aim of underpinning the focus of the stated objectives answered above.

1. What are the underlying trends for listening to Irish public service radio?

As has been shown in 'The Listening Audience – Context and Change' chapter, many other services are in competition to attract the same audience. Niche local music stations in Dublin and national stations are attractive propositions to the different demographic age groupings beloved by key advertisers. RTE Radio 1 and 2FM are in serious competition with these stations. With regard to the two specific age groups looked at in-depth for this research, RTE Radio 1's 'reach' for the 35-44-year-olds has fallen from 50 percent to 25 percent from 1995 to 2010. Likewise, 2FM's 'reach' has dropped from 34 percent to 15 percent over the same period. The picture is equally the same in the 25-34-year olds. Stations like Newstalk 106FM are seen as playing in the same field as RTE Radio 1 and entertaining presenters from

these non-RTE stations are seen as more engaging. RTE Radio 1 is still the most popular station by far in Dublin and across the country. And while the top-line audience figures are in rude health, the station has suffered reputational damage as a result perceived ‘enormous’ presenters’ salaries. The respondents regarded 2FM as being the ‘poor relation’ to Radio 1 and its commercial rival Today FM. Moreover, its public service mission is unclear and not distinct enough from the rest of the market.

2. How does the public radio attain and hold listener loyalty?

The *first* and most importance function of public service broadcasting as expressed by the participants for this research is the trusted supply of unbiased news and current affairs. This is seen as the backbone to RTE Radio 1. *Second* was the calibre and professionalism of polished presenters who were regarded to work on behalf of the listeners. Top presenters made listeners feel part of the conversation and were seen as consistent in their professional approach. RTE Radio 1 is seen as having a ‘heritage’ brand that *should* evolve with the times.

3. What do listeners believe is the value of Irish public service radio?

Audiences recognise that public service broadcasting is a requirement in a functioning democracy. It informs and empowers them with the provision of quality, objective and unbiased news and current affairs. They recognise that citizens should

be willing to pay to support it. However, they hold the view that *some* other independent-commercial radio services also provide public service broadcasting.

4. Do some core opinions and perceptions on public service broadcasting change over time?

It has been firmly established in this research project that views and opinions on some key issues in relation to PSB do change and evolve over time. Respondents now believe that the licence fee is an outdated model for collection and there should be a modern way of funding PSB and RTE. They also believe that there should be *some* portion of the public funding channelled to *some* services that they listen to. RTE has nurtured a bond with listener with trust being the centre of it. These licence fee investors have described their comprehensive trust in RTE being breached because of the failure of management to be more prudent with the public investment. Over the seven-year timescale of the study, the respondents have developed an educated understanding of the ethos, the ideal and broad concept that is PSB in 2012. It appears the audience is ahead and that RTE is behind the curve in this understanding.

Some recommendations

This year (2012) and the next two years will probably be the most acute years for public and private radio broadcasters in Ireland. Ireland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined 11.3 percent between 2007 and 2010; advertising went down by 42

percent over the same period⁶⁴, leading to the possibility that there is probably not enough advertising money available to support all the stations on the air. Stations are finding it difficult to meet strict BAI licence agreements regarding news, current affairs and local coverage. And yet, it is these particular areas that attract and keep the listeners tuned in. RTE recorded a deficit of €16.8 million to the end of the financial year 2011. 2FM once a successful self-sustaining entity recorded a deficit of over €5 million. The respondents for this research believe that some independent-commercial stations should get a portion of licence fee for doing public service broadcasting content. Presently, all broadcasters can apply for a grant from The Broadcast Funding Scheme (Sound & Vision II) to make programming on defined themes relating to Irish culture, heritage and experience. The Scheme excludes news and current affairs. This project concluded that most of respondents believe that news and current affairs coverage is the *core* element of PSB. The Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI), the body representing the independent-commercial radio sector, suggests that the Scheme is unwieldy and that it takes too long to turn ideas into on-air programmes. The IBI moreover, is making a claim for the additional revenue of between €30 and €40 million from the proposed universal Broadcast Charge that is planned to replace the TV Licence fee.⁶⁵ The IBI proposes to provide additional PSB programming content on independent-commercial stations. However, all these stations are privately owned and the two national stations, Today FM and Newstalk

⁶⁴ Source: Eolas Magazine date 3rd April 2013 interview with the outgoing Chief Executive of the Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland (IAPI) Seán McCrave <http://www.eolasmagazine.ie/the-institute-of-advertising-practitioners-in-irelands-sen-mccrave> [accessed date: 1/1/2013]

⁶⁵ In 2011, RTE received €183.6 million in Licence Fee income and €167.3 million in commercial revenue and recorded a deficit of €16.8 million (source RTE Annual Report 2011).

106FM are owned by Communicorp, in which the businessman Denis O'Brien is the principle shareholder.⁶⁶ Some commentators believe that he will have to sell off some stations as he takes full control of Independent News & Media (INM), which includes the Irish Independent, the Sunday Independent, the Evening Herald, the Sunday World and, as part-owner, the Star; 13 regional newspapers; and a free daily newspaper, Metro Herald (also as part-owner). Keeping all radio stations and newspaper titles may conflict with the BAI's policy of 'plurality of ownership, content and viewpoint' in the media. Should a major national commercial station come on the market, what company would purchase such an asset in a depressed market place? The minister faces a dilemma; to give all the additional funding from the Broadcast Charge to RTE or divert some to independent-commercial radio stations?

Recommendations:

- (1) Provide PSB funding from the new universal Broadcast Charge to local independent-commercial radio stations operating a 'full service, broad format' service. Draw up strict criteria for what constitutes PSB. (Funding for Community Radio is coming at present via The Broadcast Funding Scheme (S&V II) and more local advertising of goods and services and government and state agency advertising should be permitted.)⁶⁷

⁶⁶ In addition, Commicorp owns the following station in Ireland: 98FM (Dublin), Phantom 105.2FM (Dublin), Spin 103.8 (Dublin) and Spin Southwest.

⁶⁷ The government might choose to listen to what local radio in the UK currently sounds like; and how it has changed, in comparison to what it once was. The sector has largely been transformed into generic and networked music services. Local radio in Ireland is worth some public investment in *specified* PSB programming before the BAI might deregulate in a manner similar to that of the UK. (See: (Starkey, 2011))

- (2) Either closedown 2FM or radically reformat it as a fit-for-purpose PSB youth and music station. The country is probably over subscribed with stations and 2FM – *as it is* - is not considered essential to the radio landscape. If the former were the preferred option; then any spare advertising revenue, would be available to be pursued by the current - or future operator(s) - of Today FM and Newtalk 106FM.
- (3) Amend the Broadcasting Act 2009, so that the RTE Authority could be replaced with a Trust that would be viewed by the audience to act objectively in the best interests of the audience (PSB investors) above that of RTE (PSB provider).

Suggestions for further research

A suggestion might be to conduct an even a larger-scale study with a representative sample across the country. A well-designed questionnaire with analysis using SPSS software might enable a comprehensive quantitative field inquiry. Certainly, attitudes to the funding of public service broadcasting need to be assessed on a larger scale. Further, it would be very interesting to map the ‘digital natives’ use of radio and to see how radio is engaging and appealing to this group. From a research through practice approach, one could seek to identify possible short programmes that might allow RTE to engage with researched innovation. Prototypes could be worked on and could be ‘road tested’ against audience expectations and assumptions in advance of going to air. RTE could promote these as audacious flagship

endeavours that would signal a new approach to the schedule. NPR (National Public Radio) in the United States is already employing this approach.⁶⁸

The issues identified in this research are likely to feature on the political agenda over the future of public broadcasting and how to pay for. With this in mind, more research – and a wider public debate is needed!

Limitations of the research

Due to the self-selected nature of the research participants, there are problems generalising this research's findings to represent the country as a whole. All participants might be described as well educated, with the majority having obtained a degree or post-graduate level of education. All live in Dublin and in the main, could be described as from the one, higher socio-economic group. However, the results provide a rich and detailed picture of the audience's perceptions on radio listening in general and RTE Radio 1 in particular. The quantitative enquiry took a great deal of time to gather and reveal the finer details as did the collection of two separate waves of data collection from the twenty-one research respondents. The identification of trends over time using both methods revealed deep and original insights. The result informs my day-to-day work and I can say that I have advanced - in my own mind at least – the theory with the practice.

⁶⁸ RAIN (Radio and Internet Newsletter) 'NPR's new programing policy develops radio like software: agile, social, cheap. Online <http://www.kurthanson.com/news/npr%27s-new-programming-philosophy-develops-radio-software-agile-social-cheap> (accessed 4th May 2012)

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Appendix A: Interview with Adrian Moynes. MD of RTE Radio.⁶⁹

Interview with Adrian Moynes

P In meetings and discussions with say with producers in radio about the concept of public service broadcasting or when they join RTE is it taken as a given that they would, you know, know the (inaudible)?

Public Service Broadcasting

A Well it's not like a book of gospel that we, you know, get regularly and formally read extracts from..... It's not like that. There are issues which come up pretty much all the time, different issues which focus the question of what public broadcasting is, what are the values, whether our practice in a given programme or instance is in line with concepts of public service broadcasting and whether our understanding of public broadcasting is changing all the time. A clear instance at the moment would be the Rip Off Republic series because it raises questions about, in some people's minds anyway about balance, which is not actually a legal requirement of RTE. The requirement is to be impartial and objective and fair to all interests concerned but if you've got a programme like **Rip Off Republic** in which someone is giving an analysis of the economy and public policy from the perspective of the consumer and I suppose by perspective of the citizen and there aren't other voices being heard within that programme then that's the kind of example of when you start thinking well now does this represent some change in the way we think about public service broadcasting.

P Objectivity is a bit removed by the way, say, for example, the way Eddie Hobbs presented the programme.

⁶⁹ All other transcripts available upon request.

A Well some people would argue that certainly. It's a legitimate discussion and then you would have to say okay but you know it's very frequently the practice of cabinet ministers to say that they'll appear in a programme but they won't be debating with anyone. They'll do an interview with an interviewer but they won't mix it with a range of other voices so when you put that into the mix then you say well, you know, maybe this concept of being fair to all interests concerned has to be approached in a frame of mind which is saying it's not simply adequate to balance every programme. You can achieve balance over a series or maybe you can achieve balance over a period of time in the treatment of a theme you know.

P So there is no question of the concept evolves over time and that's one instance where you're talking.

A Oh I think the concept does evolve over time because the world in which the concept has to function and the needs of audiences and the kind of service that people require is constantly changing so the notion of public service broadcasting that would have been propounded by **Lord Reith** at a time when there was, you know, a monopoly provider of broadcasting is very different from the reality of the world today and how public broadcasting ought to try to respond to that.

Reach and Share

P With regard to listenership which in term in terms of public broadcasting what is most important? Is there any difference between the '**Share**' and '**Reach**' in terms of RTE radio?

A Well there is a difference. In terms of the loyalty of audiences to particular stations reaches the, sorry 'Share' is the more important figure because you're looking at how people have apportioned the total time that they've spent

listening or watching in a day to various services but reach is also important because you're then talking about a measure of how aware people are of the existence of a service and it's also of course, all these figures are important also because of the commercial activity of selling air time because the reach and share figures are in different ways currency which is used to sell air time and to sell audiences to advertisers but I suppose the distinction that you draw between reach and share is that one is about **awareness** or **exposure** to a piece of broadcasting and the other, i.e. share is about **loyalty** or **adhesion** to a particular service.

P Do you worry about say the loss of reach?

A Yes and you worry about loss of share and you try and try to do something about it (laugh) because worrying isn't at the end of the day much use to anybody and of course it's a concern because more and more, for example in radio more and more services are being licensed all the time and there is a certain mathematical inevitability, that's a phrase I've used before about this, the more services there are to attract people's attention then the more your share will go down in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of those services. At the moment how do I look at it? The think the factors in radio are different from the factors in television. So just to talk about radio at the moment. Changing things in radio doesn't happen fast. Listeners exhibit resistance to things. You can watch it during the summer when you put Ryan Tuberty that is occupied by someone who is almost iconic, Marion Finncane, it takes quite a while. We're now starting to hear. People actually saying 'ah actually he's getting better', which might be just a way of saying we're getting used to him.

Changing schedule/programmes

If you take programmes out of the schedule you're going to get a bad reaction to that and the moves that you have to make to regain audience and to build audience tend to be put in place **very gradually** and **very slowly**. I'll give you an example. We're trying at the moment to increase our reach and share at the weekends for Radio 1 particularly because we know that lifestyles are changing, **people who, in the past would traditionally have been available to hear morning radio are leading lifestyles that are much more accelerated and demanding**. We know people are commuting a lot, we know people are running around putting children into childcare and are then trying to get to work. That they have long days and we can see from our research that on a Saturday morning you could get large audiences in the early part of the morning, there would be slump and it would pick up again at lunchtime. Now those people are still out there and furthermore there is a lot of them are people who wouldn't have the few minutes to listen or the time to have a cup of coffee and listen during the week but they're there on a Saturday and they're there on a Sunday. It might be their chance to catch up with the week. **So we set out to go after this audience**. A couple of years ago Mooney Goes Wild on One was a half hour programme on a Sunday morning. We moved it to Saturday morning. We put it in after Playback which gets a big audience. We put it in 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. so we doubled duration without any significant additional cost. So it didn't require more in the way of resources because it's produced by Derek Mooney and the same team of people would be involved and in the nature of it, it didn't double the cost or anything like it but what it did was it held and added to the audience of Playback and Playback has a big audience and in the audience book that we've just had in Derek Mooney has added 50,000 listeners to his programme. This is a very, very significant thing. So the next move is okay, you're building this audience up through the morning and remember all this started two years ago, the next thing is you then take someone who is a really big radio presenter and you put that person in after the build that comes out of Playback and Mooney Goes Wild and that's what Marion is there to do from

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It takes a long time. It takes over two years to get the bits lined up.

P For the shows to settle down or whatever?

A For the people to be available to do them. I mean Marion couldn't just be simply pulled out of a daytime radio show in the middle of a season for example. We couldn't have decided to do that in the middle of last winter because her place in the schedule on the weekdays was so critical, there had to be someone who had developed to the point where that person could go into the slot that she vacated on weekdays so that she was then free to be able to go to the weekend.

P So which came first then, the decision to build a weekend audience or the day time, mid morning audience?

A They actually have to be conducted in tandem. You've got to decide, you've got to look all those issues. You've got to try and make sense of them, you've got to say here's a gross opportunity, here are audiences that we're not currently serving at the weekend, we can bring something to them, in order to bring the best thing to them we would like to do this but the reality is we can only do that so we do it in stages and it takes engineering over a period of a couple of years.

P (Inaudible) or reach the weekend figures on the same date because for years the weekend, come two weeks later and nobody seems to be whatever.

A But that point about the general or becoming a seven day week book, that's all tied into what I'm talking about.....

P Changing lifestyles?

- A Yeah because we were saying we need to have this information and we need to know all this together. You know this business of having Monday to Friday and then Saturday and Sunday, on Saturday and Sunday you're evaluated on a different kind of basis or using a different sample or whatever is not satisfactory so you've got to engineer all those things.

Radio 1 in Dublin

- P Okay. RTE Radio 1 is particular, you know, in terms of its popularity in Dublin, it's streets ahead of all the competition. My research is kind of focusing on Dublin and it might be obvious why it might be popular. What's your own opinion why it's so popular in Dublin, leading the market share. I suppose Radio 4 and BBC Radio 2 lead the market in London for example.

- A And the home counties. Well part of it is there's a tradition of performance in programme making but I suppose the other thing is, you know, if you live close to where a service originated you may feel reasonably that it's more relevant to your life and that is a factor. We would like a service which, is based here, to be relevant to everybody all over the country to the same degree but I doubt that it can be. I mean people in North Donegal or South Kerry will feel that this service is far away from them, certainly not as close to them as Highland Radio or Radio Kerry. It can't be and well that's just a reality that we have to deal with. There are twenty-eight services outside of this house that we have to compete against and you can't compete on twenty-eight fronts at once. It's impossible.

Distinctive and Diverse

- P The BBC mentions adding value in their report this year, they discuss and amplify the fact that their services should be distinctive and diverse and do you think that the schedule on say for example Radio 1 and 2FM is distinctive or diverse enough. You're talking about market share and audiences.
- A But part of the problem with losing share is that you are distinctive and diverse. If it was only a matter of having the larger audiences in Ireland.....
- P It's a simple formulae.
- A It's actually a simple, well I mean I wouldn't underestimate but it's a pretty straight forward fix. Now if as a public broadcaster you do that you veer from one set of risks to another. What I mean by that is this. If we lose audience share there will come a point when you will face the public or the public representatives who will say you're getting all this licence fee every year and nobody is listening to you. What are you at? If on the other hand you veer to the opposite extreme and you simplify schedules and offer a formatted recipe to people and you maximise audiences two things will happen. Those same public representatives will say to you 'where's the drama, where's the quality current affairs, where is the services for people who are disabled, where are the programmes about travel and cookery and gardening' and all these other things. Where's all that gone, all those good things you used to do. And secondly what will happen is that the commercial sector will say you're eating our lunch and you're doing it on the basis of a public subsidy and that's not on. F
- P So you know that type of thing of the appeal, (inaudible) appeal, the notion of public service broadcasting, I mean they're not mutually exclusive or popular or whatever.
- A In fact you won't be public without being popular, you know in that sense.

License fee and commercial advertising

- P I mean because your dual function in terms that you take advertising and the licence fee, I mean do you think there's a conflict between public service broadcasting being commercial and say take the licence fee. For example would you prefer to get total licence fee money like the BBC and not have to deal with the commercial activity?
- A I think not actually on balance. It would be easy say yes you'd prefer to have it totally publicly funded but that's actually not a reality in this country and I wouldn't spend any time really day-dreaming which is what you'd be doing. It's not going to happen. I do think that there's a real benefit that comes from being commercial focused. We have a very strong sense here of having to pay our way because the licence fee funding is given to us at the end of the year after we earned our commercial revenue. What I mean is this **that the mentality here is not that the licence fee will save our bacon, we can do what we like. We have the discipline that any business has of projecting what we'll do in the coming year or years, setting a budget for that and a very strict discipline of sticking to that budget.** We have commercial revenue targets and we watch them daily and weekly. I can tell you now how much money we need to earn every week of this month of September to be on target on commercial revenue. That is a very, very strict discipline. Cost control is a very strict discipline. You know when you do something like send a number of people - and it wasn't a huge number of people by any manner or means - to cover the death of the Pope and all of that you get a bulge in your travel and expenses costs for that period and that's something the we've got to sort out between now and the year's end because we will come in on budget. Now we do all of that and at the end of all of that we still we still have a shortfall, we're in deficit in radio. Why, because **Radio na Gaeltachta earns no commercial revenue whatsoever of any**

significance, €50,000 this year they will take in and some small sponsorships and so on. Lyric FM will take in about a €500,000 and not one penny of public funding is attributed to 2FM. So 2FM has to pay its own way so essentially we have pay for Radio na Gaeltachta, Lyric and a very significant chunk of Radio 1 and we have to do that on the basis of commercial funding with the deficit being made up by public funding but we push very hard for the commercial funding and I think that's a good discipline.

P And it's very transparent in the reports.

A Well it is now. It wasn't in the past but it certainly is now.

RTE service and the other commercial stations

P In terms of what the independent commercial sector; from the twenty-six stations/twenty-eight local stations and Today FM and what they provide. Do you stay clear of what they're offering or do you even consider what they're doing in terms of what you are doing.

A Well we do consider what they're doing because we obviously listen to what they're doing because we're interested to see, you know, because there is creativity there, there's talent there and you're interested in that because we're all in the same business obviously. So yes we do. We watch that but that I mean that point I made earlier is that there are ways in which we simply can't compete. I mean you can't do local stories in the way that they can. You can't do all the local stories everyday in the way that the some total of local radio services do them. I don't have any difficulty with them doing whole ranges of things if they want to do documentaries or drama or they want to do Irish language programme, any of those thing, I mean that's fine, it's entirely business, they're free agents and they can compile their schedules

and include whatever type of programming they wish. I don't know that a whole lot of them are falling over themselves to do those things but I mean they would say that they obviously don't have the resources and in fairness a lot of them don't. I mean I respect the ways in which they're different and have to do something different from us and I think by and large and people are reasonable and they respect the things that we do because of our public service remit. There isn't a bad quality of relationship between us and commercial broadcasters to say the least. Certainly when people meet and so on at any of these industry forums, things are always very agreeable but I mean I don't know that but I would have no problem for example about working with community radio even giving people access to programmes from the archive or whatever. That has happened to a certain extent. Lyric has invited people from radio stations in the mid west and so on to come to training sessions that they've been doing for programme makers.

P Would you see that, at the moment, radio being more formalised or is it formalised at the moment?

A Ah it has its own structures and so on. I mean it's.

P Do you see yourselves as taking the community radio in the training sense under your wing or.....

A Not really but we're available to. I mean training is an expensive business.

P Is it recognising the ethos of community radio the public service thing what they're doing and what.....

A They're doing something very valuable and it's not a, I suppose you could be territorial and so on but what's the point. They're providing where they live and it's important to people.

2FM and public service broadcasting

P 2FM is very successful financially as you detailed in the book. It doesn't need any subvention from the licence fee and in terms of public service broadcasting ethos can you elaborate or explain the distinctiveness for example, of 2FM.

A I see it in a number of aspects with 2FM. First of all you can point to things like initiatives which it has in its schedule, like **TY Radio**, the Transition Year Radio service where it actually takes a programme, a project into transition year classes in secondary schools the length and breath of Ireland and it gives youngsters the chance to make an hour of radio. It shows them..... A producer and a researcher goes into the school, spends a week with these youngsters and their teachers and they make a radio programme which is broadcast on the national airways. Now that's a significant kind of thing to do and it actually mirrors something that Lyric FM does because they have an in schools introduction to music and radio project called Music in the Classroom.

P The JNLRs show that in the audience.

A There are youngsters there, there's a growth there. So you can point to something very obvious like that. You can point to something like the fact that **the recording of bands and the doing of live music** is done by 2FM and that actually isn't done by anybody else. That's a very significant thing. The fact that it has a, developed in the last two years since the licence fee increase it has placed in it's schedule every night a **half an hour of news and current affairs** especially tailored for that audience with the pace and style of delivery which is geared to its audience. The fact that in the evenings it does a very eclectic range of music and new music included which is not, it is frankly not

commercially viable. Again if you wanted to maximise a night-time audience you wouldn't be doing this kind of thing. The fact that **Dave Fanning** is doing a kind of arts show every day for ninety minutes from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. when we could be doing a very popular music driven drive time show is dealing with arts and information in a way I think that a wholly commercial agenda would not deal with them and the final thing I would point to is the **Gerry Ryan** show. Because it is insufficiently recognised the extent to which a whole range of issues are dealt with on that show, which are very subtly dealt with. There presented as very populist radio but he will deal with postnatal depression, problems of adult literacy, health issues, a whole range of things and he takes those to an audience who are not the audience of Radio 1, not the audience of Today FM or you know. It's an appeal based on a style of broadcasting, which means that some really significant issues in people's lives are brought to a very, very large audience every day.

P Is it the core market for 2FM aged 14-24.

A No.

Target Audience for 2FM

P What is the.....

A It's no longer that. Whatever it started out at twenty-six years ago it is operating in an different environment. There are services being specifically licensed by the BCI, this is right and proper, I have no issue with it. They're targeting, people are getting licences on the basis of targeting audiences like that, spend and all the rest of it and good luck to them and they're perfectly right to do it but if we said that 2FM is for 15-24 while all of that is going on we'd be kidding ourselves. It can't be, it no longer has a monopoly of being youth radio in Ireland.

P So that's like for example, I mean I know 2FM and Radio Ireland (inaudible) Today FM, and one of the criticisms Willie O'Reilly would say is that at the moment he couldn't change much without sort of getting sanction from the BCI in terms of management of programmes or whatever. Are you saying that 2FM over time or is taking the decision to no longer serve the core market which was initially perceived as.....

A **The core market is served in the evening certainly and when I mention things like Transition Year radio and all the rest of it and the news and current affair's programme these are things which are geared to appeal to young people** and to involve young people in radio programme making but you've got to ask yourself if a national service is to have an audience during the day and if it's to pay it's way how can you be providing a youth service when most young people are not going to be available to listen. What you do is you provide a different style of radio for the mainstream population. Now that has been the reality for as long as Gerry Ryan has being doing his show.

P But when Ryan Tuberty was in his slot followed by Ruth and Rick and you know the placing of (inaudible) and all that sort of stuff it's a very significant public statement that 2FM is now no longer super serving for example this youth audience, it's whatever.....

A Well a couple of things about that, we have to stop audience loss. That's 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. we have got to keep audiences because then we will end up facing that question that I mentioned at the outset. Where're your listeners? If you analyse the audience for the Full Irish when Ryan Tuberty was doing it, when it was at it's peak you would find that an awful lot of the audience for that programme were, well we know were people in cars, driving their kids to school and going on to work in the morning. You had a lot of people in their late 20s early 30s. They were also doing things like items from schools and

going into classrooms and all the rest of it but its core audience was not I would suggest 14-24 years of age. It was a little bit older than that. Putting Marty in there as I say is about retaining audience and about growing audience. There are, Marty is pretty much in the same age group as.....

P Gerry Ryan.

A He's younger than Gerry I think.

P He's a year, 49.

A. 49 and actually Ray Darcy isn't far behind it. Ray is early to mid forties I'd say and that's a point about broadcasters needing experience to operate at that level. And just the thing about Ryan leaving the Full Irish. There is a question about how sustainable a particular programme format is. We had a view last Autumn that perhaps the Full Irish had peaked. It's a very successful programme but we also needed to address the question that Radio 1 needed some renewal. Marion had signalled that she wanted to do this thing at the weekend so you know we're trying if you like bring in some younger listeners into that station as well.

P Now in terms of the Tuberty show, the new one hour slot a day, Ryan said he was going to do a light format before for example, you know, Pat Kenny came on or whatever and maybe John Creedon's brief is that too before the news at 1 p.m. So Ryan would have Gerry Ryan doing, I think he described it himself or his producers as a tabloid format or whatever. Is there much in terms of the difference between what Ryan Tuberty was producing for example in that hour and Gerry Ryan in a similar type of radio in the far side or..... Is the effect just to lighten up before, you know, the heavy weight stuff after Morning Ireland.

A Yes it is that. It's to be some kind of hammock between Morning Ireland and Pat Kenny. That doesn't mean that it's going to be froth. I mean it hasn't been this week. There's been a number of things that they've done like getting Bob Geldoff on the morning that it was announced that he was going to be getting the freedom of the city of Dublin and having Eddie Hobbs and John McCreak on Monday morning. All of these things are personality broadcasting. I mean these shows are, they're about the people who present them as well as the content that's in them and it's about the approach that a particular presenter brings. Now Ryan Tuberty is not going to do the same theme in the same way as Gerry Ryan or Pat Kenny so it's the personalities that bring changes of light and shade and nuance to the coverage.

P I found even discussions with the audience even personality of the presenters right, but the personality of the radio station.

A Yes.

P And I've been investigating for example, you know, people's earliest listening.

A Peoples sorry what?

P Earliest listening memories.

A Oh yes.

P And it seems to me that if for example they listened to Radio 1 as a child, they're can of bound to listen to it background when they reach a certain age and then you have others who were raised on the commercial sector. They seem to have problems for example getting into Radio 1 when they reach a certain age because they never had any experience of it. They kind of tend to

listen to the Ray Darcys. Only when I listened did I realise the difference, you know, in terms of quality between..... Well that's only me speculating. In terms of the summer okay most of the big names in Radio 1 and 2FM take their holidays and I've been asking the audience in terms of that. They seem to like it or they don't like it or whatever. In terms of, what would you say, it's pretty unique to radio that, you know, RTE radio the entire.....

A People move off.

P You've said that, you've used that for people come on the air to try them out for example while the other take their holidays.

A Well there are a couple of reality of life. A lot of these people are in the age where they have children and so they like to take their holidays when they're children are on holidays like anybody else. Take a couple of specific cases. Pat Kenny does a five day week radio show and presents the Late Late Show. Now there isn't anybody who can do that for much longer than he does it, for the number of weeks in the year that he does it. I would defy anybody to take on that workload and you simply can't sustain it all year round and he has a young family. He has two young girls. In some cases people who are established broadcasters many years ago established their entitlement to summer leave in their contracts and people have that established practice it is very, very difficult to break it particularly as they get old. It's just a simple fact of life. What we did this year, I mean the reason Ryan Tuberty had left 2FM in March was to give him a break so that he would be there for the summer. He will now work right through the summer and right through to this years end and it will be quite a time before he gets a break again and he will be doing a television show. Very often you have to manage people like that across television and radio and there simple comes a point where it's unsustainable any longer. People have to have their break. Now I know that there's an easy assumption that these are highly paid people and probably that

the work doesn't look that difficult from the outside. But they put in the work, they put in the hours and they have to have the break the same as anybody else because they'll come back stale if they don't have it.

P And where that came up as an issue was say for example if people were, not like myself who would have the summer off whatever, that in their life they get two weeks annual holidays. They were wondering why for example, it's great to have time off and I'll listen to, for example, Pat Kenny and when I'm taking time off he's off too. That's why I raised that. Now with regard to Radio 1 and 2FM, this is probably going over a little bit of ground, do 2FM or Radio 1 concede any audiences in terms of like.....

A Say that there are people we don't deal with is that what you mean?

P Yeah.

A That we just sort of say well that's not an audience for us. Well I suppose (laugh).....

P Well say for example 2FM daytime you've said that the likes of Spin and the Beats and the upcoming regional stations are going to probably go after them, new audience so you know the likes of that you would see, could concede that you can't cater for them during the day.

A Well you've got to recognise that there's an awful lot of people out there chasing after all those audiences so I mean our approach is to try and spread. I mean I know people in their 20s who listen to Gerry Ryan and I know people in their 80s who listen to Gerry Ryan. Much to my surprise people in their 80s who listen to Gerry Ryan but they do. Now 80 year olds are not part of the plan but if they want to listen to him, they're very welcome (laugh). Surely we concede, there is nothing in 2FM at night-time that is going to

appeal to the typical person who is over 45 I would have thought. Maybe there's some ageing rockers or whatever who would still be up with the play but they don't run to significant numbers of people. If Radio 1 is doing essentially a news and information agenda during the day with some breaks for music or lightening of the tone well then if you're really just aren't going to be chasing after people who want Larry Gogan's Golden Hour or you know. I mean they are services that are established to do broadly speaking certain kinds of things. Radio 1 to be a station of record with basically news and information agenda. 2FM to be broadly speaking a popular entertainment channel. A mix of talk and music during the day. Talk in the morning, music for the rest of the prime time hours and Lyric is about something which is an alternative a lot of the clammer that goes on in the world and Radio na Gaeltachta is a fully pledged, you know, Radio 4/Radio 1 type service with music, significant music elements for people who speak Irish. I mean they have their jobs to do which means that yes they define themselves by the kind of people who don't listen to them. That's true.

P Are you happy with you know Lyrics position now that it's a....

A Well I'd like it to have a few more listeners. I mean Lyric would like it to have a few more listeners but slowly, slowly, slowly it seems to be going that way. It's a very, very tough build you know.

P I mean some of the market (inaudible).

A Not in this country. Obviously something of that kind has been provided by Classic FM in the UK which I must say I used to enjoy listening to when it first appeared but after a time I found its experience on the ear a bit tiresome. Over commercialised I thought.

P Formatted. With regard to the words of the Audience Council what influence has the Council on RTE radio? Is it like a feedback programme?

A It is, it is all that. Just my own relationship to it is that as of now, as of this autumn I'm going to attend all its meetings and be if you like a pretty direct channel of communication between it and the heads of the television, radio and news and the Executive Board. So first of all it's a place where you listen. It's maybe an extension, you could think of it as an extension of the ways that we listen to the audience. People have pretty direct access to the people responsible for radio, traditionally people would write. I often pick up that phone and there's a listener who is angry about something or occasionally wants to compliment you on something and to be honest sometimes it's the last thing you need or whatever but it's not hard to phone this office and talk to me directly and it's important to have time for that and to listen to what people are saying but also people e-mail. We established an e-mail access for people to radio. The e-mails that we receive every week are circulated, or the main points from them are circulated within the radio service. We have done things like published questionnaires in the RTE Guild and asked people what kind of programmes they wanted and as we've been able to introduce those programmes we've contact all those people individually and said that point you made to us will be..... That's a series that's starting on Radio 1 on Tuesday the 16th October at 8 p.m. or whatever. So we work very hard at feeding back to people how we've responded to their reactions. The Audience Council represents a broad cross-section of Irish society and it's particularly valuable for that point that I made earlier about the impossibility of competing on all those fronts, of being all things to all people. If we're, take an obvious example, if we were being too Dublin focused you'll hear about it. The Audience Council usefully last year criticised the way we covered the local government elections. We kind of stopped too early in the evening dealing with it on Radio 1. Significantly Radio na Gaeltachta made a much better job with coverage of the local

government elections. An Audience Council can make you very aware of that. It's also a place where you can talk to people about difficult issues of judgement, you know, questions like taste and decency and things like that and it also in a systematic way looks at our output. Audience Council members would look at let's say business programming on Radio 1. You'll go to a meeting and they will have listened, assessed, discussed, they'll present you views, they'll ask you questions. So I think that kind of dialogue is valuable.

P In terms of new shows or developing programme concepts for Radio 1 can you talk about how they are generated or are there constant negotiations, for example the different editors that you have in place and are looking for more space. Can you give me some insight into that process of developing new programmes.

A I'll give you an example from the early summer which was the development of a new kind of service. For a long time we wanted to give people on Saturday and Sunday afternoons a choice, a listening choice because we were doing sport on all the wavebands and we decided that we'd do this thing called Second Helpings which is a representation, a repeat in other words of selection of feature material which is by and large in the evening schedule and often has quite small audiences there and is very good production quality so we wanted to give it another opportunity to get listeners and to give people a chance to hear things as an alternative to sport and to catch up on stuff. So that's a very good idea. It's also valuable because in the next few years we will have to devise schedules like that on digital radio. They'll be more space for this kind of catch up listening and alternatives and choices and so on. So it's a kind of dry run for that. So there's a benefit for the audience, there's a benefit for us, so we put this together. And then we said okay well we'll put that out, we'll confine sport to FM and we'll put that out in medium wave and long wave and that was where we made the mistake because we got this

reaction from the UK from people who follow Irish sport and a lot of immigrants and so on and it's a simple thing. We were able to restore the sport on long wave so that people in the UK could get it. So there's an example of how you can introduce, you have a good idea, you put it in place but you don't get it quite right. Now in radio it's pretty easy to pull back from something like. It's no big deal. It's literally a matter of throwing switches.

P I was going to talk to you about digital radio and two questions in relation to that. One is the technology and the roll out, at what stage is that at or at any stage and secondly the possibility to introduce additional networks.

A Yes, okay.

P So I mean somebody I think it was the head of operations somewhere on record said wanted to (inaudible) eighty years old radio in Ireland this year.

A Well it would be a convenient occasion, yeah. You know you need to set some sort of target to try and get these things. First of all remember there's no legislative framework for digital broadcasting in the country. What is happening is it's taking hold around Europe and it has taken hold very significantly in our next door neighbour and the frequencies which are allocated for broadcasting are all up for review next year at the Regional Radio Conference, it's an international conference that assigns space and the frequency to various countries. So as a country we have to be very careful that we secure next year the frequency that we'll need for many years to come, many, many years to come. The last significant agreement was in the 1960s. So for decades ahead our ability to broadcast across bands of spectrum will be determined by decisions that are made next year.

P Is that digital space or.....

A Digital and analogue. Now so first of all we need legislation and a regulatory framework. Secondly we need spectrum but lets assume that we have all those things. What do we need to do? Well we need to provide services which offer the content that persuade people to buy digital radios. It's what happened in the 1920s. There was this thing called radio, nobody could see much use for it and programmes were invented to make it popular. We could actually have to go through something like that and we have a plan which we're working on here. We're finalising it at the moment to take us through the next five/six years and it's a plan which obviously has an opt out. It's got an escape clause in case this thing doesn't work but what we have done is we have set out three phases. The first would be a test, a pilot project which could be started next year if we got the ahead.

P Is that DAB?

A DAB. We could do DAB single frequency network with a transmitter here in Three Rock and another one up near Dundalk. So you've covered the east coast where the bulk of the population is and we would then beyond that, we could see that we would make our four radio services available, Today FM and other national service presumably could be made available on it if they were interested. I suppose they would be but we could also create two additional services. One based on archive and one based on catch-up or you could do a middle of the road music service or whatever. There's a range of things we can do but say we did six. You could do that as a pilot. You could establish the technology, the ability to do a single frequency network, you could check out that reception inside buildings throughout the coverage area is good, that it works. Then you could go to stage two which would be that you would commit then to providing that service in that area of service and stage three would be where you would go nationally and you would add to the number of services. So what we've done is we've just tried to sit down very

sensibly and say okay what's a reasonable amount of money to spend at each stage and how would we finance it and would we be switching off medium wave and long wave and if we did what would we do with?

P What about DRM?

A Well DRM is.....

P (Inaudible) sponsor next week.

A Yes well for example the 252 transmitter and the long wave transmitter in Meath would be perfect as a carrier for DRM. But DRM is really about in the current development of things it's really about coverage over quite vast areas and I'm not sure that it would, it might be better for example if all the European public broadcasters had transponder space on a satellite. The actual radiating of signals is expensive. Long wave and medium wave service cost us €2,500,000 a year. For long wave it's mostly about us. It's electricity costs.

P BBC announced yesterday that they're launching they're Freeview with their radio channels on satellite as well you know for people, like there's 25% who can't get the (inaudible). But the other thing is that on digital here how are you going to try and get people interested, just discussions obviously and (inaudible) took a view that they wanted (inaudible) redundant medium.

A Yeah they were interested in DVBH.

P So I'm just wondering now how it's going to pan out? It would be stupid to think (inaudible).

A Yeah well it is a hard one to read. My money is on DAB.

P Hopefully. Okay there's the possibility of the quasi national station they're talking about now and the people I asked about like I said what do you think this service might be covering and they couldn't really see. Of course Today FM or 106FM are the largest name in the hat but the audience I talked to couldn't conceive any kind of particular service that was missing from the area of broadcasting. What's your own view on what that station could do or will it have any dent on what you're doing?

A I don't know. I just read about it in the paper. Somebody said something about quasi national services and I thought well right I don't know what that means and honestly I don't mean to give you a short answer but I don't know. I hadn't had much time to think about it frankly. I mean what I thought was what everybody thought that News Talk was going to almost national but I don't think that that's a certainty at all.

P And Today FM are up for renewal at the moment.

A Well it's a most important thing for any commercial broadcaster, renewal because you invest so much in building up audience and if your licence is eight or ten years and then you suddenly find whether it's gone. It's cruel you know, it's tough.

P Could other stations do public service broadcasting albeit it different from RTE.

A Of course they could but you know all these things are about you pay for them and if you're strictly in business they're about how you can make a few bob as well. You know the kind of things that go with public service broadcasting mean trying to serve wide ranges of interests and sectors of the population even beyond the point where it's not commercially viable to do

that and that's not a place where wholly commercial broadcasters can normally afford to go. It's not what the business is about.

P Do you think that RTE will continue to be sole recipient of the licence fee?

A Well it isn't in the sense that there's a 5%.....

P The 5%.

A Yeah the 5% is gone now. Well it's sitting fund waiting to be dispersed. No my answer is that once you cross that bridge and once you start, you know 5% could become 7.5% could become, you know, I don't want to be talking about that in a sense (laugh) somebody might think it's a very good idea and I'm not encouraging it or endorsing the notion.

P It could be a chip at the.....

A I suppose I would be very, very conscious that there are an awful lot of things that are done here. I mean most of the things that are done here are done for a fraction of the cost that other public service broadcasters incur.

P You mean in the UK.

A Yeah. I mean you take a programme like Rattle Bag in the afternoon. Rattle Bag has two producers here. The equivalent half hour not three-quarters, but half hour Front Row has nine. Now that's not going to change. That's a simple fact of life the BBC have a bigger audience and bigger income coming in but we make one hell of a damn respectable arts programme every afternoon here. It is a high quality show and I don't respect people to be running around applauding us for that but now and again you need to actually remind people of all the plays, of all the people that get to write, of all the

people who get their first public airing here, of all the bands that first recorded in the studio here, of all the, I reckoned on the back of an envelope calculation one time that something like five hundred traditional musicians a year are broadcast on Ceile House on a Saturday night alone not to talk about anything that Radio na Gaeltachta does or all these things. I mean this is a huge undertaking, which is about bringing stimulation, information, pleasure to the public. Things like the Active Age Talent Contest than ran through the winter, I mean nobody else is going to say to a producer and a researcher from Radio 1 go around the halls and hotels of Ireland looking for people over 65 who can sing and dance and tell a yarn or whatever and make two hours of radio out of it at the end. Nobody else in Ireland is going to say to a producer and a research actually I want you to stop making three hours of music everyday. I want you to go around the secondary schools of Ireland giving transition year kids an opportunity to make radio programmes. These are actually decisions that you make about the resources available to you and that's what we do.

P The people I spoke to who listen to radio - whatever age group they were in - think 99% of them saw no problem whatsoever, even the questions, very objectively put about "what do you think of other radio stations having access to the licence fee?" - I just thought that it was a major 'given' that they respected fully everything RTE is doing that. It made me think 'if these people who are the core listeners are even thinking that way that some of the license fee could be diverted..'

A But you see the licence fee is a tax.

P Yeah and they see it as that. They don't like paying it. No in terms of the licence fee being distributed among other organisations, they seem to have no problem with that. In terms of independent producers I mean I know obviously documentary strands, you know, where BBC would have

commissioning rounds for Radio 4, but is RTE radio... is it going down that area or whatever? That you make a commitment to source , say, 20% or more from outside RTE?

A We don't have that. They have a statutory commitment in their case. We have it on television. (Inaudible) has always been the viability of the exercise for people making programmes. To develop what they call a production sector, a critical mass of people who are capable of doing the work in television, it inevitably means that some I don't know six or a dozen companies are going to be of sufficient size that basically what they do is make television programmes and they're doing work of the quality and in the quantity which enables them to earn the income that justifies the whole thing. Yes we could do but you know what we would do, I think inevitably what it means is that some people who once worked here or some people who currently work here would go out there and be VAT registered and they would be supplying us with material. And all right there would be a turnover in those numbers of people and so on. Would it add greatly to the diversity of what we're doing, it might. I don't know. You see and don't forget this one of the reasons why the statute was brought in about television and independent production was because there was no place for people to go in Ireland who wanted to make television programmes unless they were on the staff of RTE. It's very, very difficult to be an independent in Ireland. The law was changed. Television had to deal with that. There are fifty radio....

P It's great I mean their production values of other companies.

A It's superb but there are fifty radio stations in Ireland.

P Maybe they'll start using this public focus (laugh).

- A Well I think that's partly the reason why that was done. Maybe it's another way of coming at the same thing.
- P And it's interesting, I just got the application forms and the details yesterday (inaudible) to see what people, when it's on (inaudible) big times for these sort of programmes.
- A I mean you have to get broadcasters to commit to the idea and so.
- P It's funny I mean whether 104FM decide for example that they couldn't even do this. What to you constitutes the biggest treat to RTE as a public service broadcasting station?
- A The loss of public trust because everything rots from that. [If] People don't trust you, they won't pay for it.
- P I mean of course people mentioned this to me so many times, the news, the quality with RTE is that milestone of the difference between that and the independent sector.
- A I'm not casting aspersions on anyone but the heart beat of the enterprise is the reliability, the trustworthiness of the news and then everything else. These things aren't about propaganda services and you know it's very important actually to have a differences of opinion with government or powerful interests in the country. It's actually necessary for that to be the case because in broadcasting you should not be cosy with powerful interests.
- P In terms of say for example, you know people have mentioned that Scrap Saturday kind of thing, you know, missing from airwaves, would that be ever on the agenda bringing comedy back like that.

A Yes the issue is, there is only one issue for me are there people who are capable of writing it and delivering it. People might say there's no welcome here or there is a welcome here or whatever. I think in the current climate there's certainly a welcome for it but again I deal with these things terribly pragmatically. People said you know that Dermot Morgan, that the enterprise was taken off the air. I don't know, perhaps it was taken off the air, perhaps it wasn't taken off the air but teams of people generating stuff like that tend only to be able to do it for a certain period of time. I mean there's something about those intense highly creative enterprises that cause them ultimately to perhaps even to collapse in on themselves. I'm not saying that that happened in this particular case but you can't, I mean there's a reason why there's thirteen Faulty Tours, you know. There's a reason why, I don't know, why the Beatles broke up you know. Things have a trajectory. If a team came along like that again of course they'd be on the air but I wouldn't expect them to be there for ever.

P (Inaudible) Eddie Hobbs, he was having a go apart from the whole thing of whatever of Rip Off Ireland he was saying things.....

What do you think RTE Radio will sound like in ten years time or where will it be in ten years time.

A I don't know. I don't know what it will sound like in ten years time. I have to think of it in terms of this challenge to remain central to Irish life. There are three things that RTE Radio needs to do and needs to continue to do. It needs to make programmes with passion and there are, these four services are full of people with a passion for making good radio. People talk about competition in Irish radio, there's more competition between my door here and Eithne Hand's door at the other end of this building. These people, there's people out there in those daytime programmes are keenly competitive. They all want to be top of the pile and so on. So there's a passion here. The

second thing that it needs to be is central to Irish life. It has to be dealing with the issues that affect people as they live from day to day. It has to be about their politics, their culture, their health service, their transport, their childcare, all of those things. It has to be in tune with their lives. And the third thing it has to be is competitively effective. It has to be able to go out into the market place and say we are a benchmark for quality, we have the audiences to prove it, it is worth your while buying our time to advertise your goods and services. Those are the three things it has to do. If it does all those things I'll believe it'll maintain public trust and it'll be healthy and there maybe six channels or ten channels in ten years from now. I won't be here but I think some of the younger people out there or somebody whose, I don't know.....

P Don't mention Willie O'Reilly (laugh).

A Well somebody who could be working in a local radio service or somebody whose maybe over in Britain or France or somewhere working in broadcasting will be here trying to ensure that it continues to have a future, you know.

Appendix B: Interview with Eithne Hand, Head of RTE Radio 1.

Interview with Eithne Hand, Head of RTE Radio 1
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[one minute in and audio commences]

There were editors alright, however, it was split into Time Zones. So it was Daytime, Nighttime and Weekend Editors. So one of the first things I did was to look at that and see it that was really serving the best interests of both the people here and the listeners.

In a way it had worked and it was in place for about three or four years as well. But the previous system has been one where it had been split into actual types of programming. And I just had a sense, coming from the floor - and [having] been working in lots of different types of programming –that, in a way, that plays more to people’s skills. So rather than saying, that you are the Editor of Weekends, which means that you’re in charge of Religious Programming, and you’re in charge of Sport, and you’re in charge in Sunday Miscellany – which may not be all be things that are you’re particular thing or bag – we would have Editors working on areas that they would have interest and knowledge of, and that would be their background.

It was almost like reinventing the wheel because it was back to what we had previously... We have an Editor of Features Arts and Drama which is Lorelie Harris; We have an Editor of Sports and Music – which is just two particular passions that Paddy Glackin is very proficient in; We have and Editor of Daily Talk shows is what we called the Daytime ones. You can get very hung up on what is current-affairs and someone

says, “Is Live Line current affairs, or is Live Line entertainment?”. And you say “look, this is a daily talk programme and it’s coming out of the same area. So it’s called Daily Talk Shows and Current Affairs for the sake of it.

And we also obviously have a Newsroom which is doing current affairs, so you would have this kind of what’s the difference between This Week and Worlds Apart – that kind of thing. Then we have a Development Editor, that was Anne Marie O’ Callaghan.

PH: Is the Development Editor new?

EH: No, the Development Editor was there before. That was a complete continuation. We kind of tweaked it a bit in terms of new talent and looking at new people available to come on stream. We did music and sports presenters, and then this year, it was more about contributors and new voices that would come on air. And then Regional Editor, that was a new one – there hadn’t been a Regional Editor – and then Tom McGuire became Regional Editor.

He’s based in Athlone and is responsible for Cork and all of the regional focus. Obviously we’ve been doing these commitments in terms of the license fee and these commitments came under Tom’s remit so he’s been doing all of the various ‘focuses’, where we go around and say, “well we’re in North Leitrim this week or at the Ploughing Championships or whatever. So that’s the structure at that level. And below that then, we have PICs, Producers-in-Charge, still, of different programmes.

That really only operates on programme teams – where you have large numbers of people. There wouldn’t be a producer in charge of Sunday Miscellany, that’s just a producer. Obviously you have your daytime programmes with your Pat’s and now Marian at the weekends, that would still be a team programme. Where you’ve got

three or four producers and maybe a couple of researchers and a reporter or two, depending on the different shows, then you need a producer in charge of that.

There is about seven Producers-in-Charge, they tend to come and go. We have put somebody in to be in charge of Drama, that's a more Producer-in-Charge role.

Producers-in-Charge are not at a management level but they're working with teams managing the team and then they would have the editor to rely on as backup. There would be a lot of interaction between PICs and editors. So that's Really the way it works, there is a lot more inter-connectedness now.

PH: In terms of that, so, you can liaise with anybody and they can liaise with you. Or is that strictly for Producers-in Charge?

EH: No, I would have Producers-in-Charge coming in here all the time, saying, "Did you hear the show? What did you think of it?". We'd have interaction like that all the time. But there's also a lot more of interaction with other areas of radio which is new. Like there were never any conversations with Sales or Advertising, four years ago, five years ago. They were in a different building. We didn't know what they did. They didn't know what we did, we thought. And now it's completely joined up. (Because) they [have] come in to the actual building. The Sales Department moved into the building. They're now much more involved in all things. Like they would have previously been going out selling programmes, in terms of airtime and yet they would have never met the producers, they would never have known the people involved or how the show was put together or what was the 'live' -vs- the recorded element.

So that's all been very useful, they've been here and it's now a completely homogenous group of people. So there would be a lot of interaction with Sales, with people who have a commercial sense of things as well as the purely editorial side of things. So there's also a Head of Operations that wasn't there before; which is more in terms of getting things to air and out on air, systems working properly and all that.

So J P Cokely is the Head of Operations and he is on the Board as well. It's become much more personalized, so people know who they've to go to [in order] to get things done and fault reporting and all that kind of thing.

PH: And the Sales team, would they be making presentation to the producers?

EH: Not quite, but we've been talking this year about doing that. Not that they necessarily make a presentation but we were talking about putting together something where they would sit down and say "this is what we say about your programme" - it's all based on the JNLRs as you know - but it's just to give people a sense of the slant or the push that might be there so that if Liveline has a different audience shape than the Creedon Show then it's kind of interesting for Liveline to know what Sales are saying about them and it is relevant. So they'd be very involved around that time of JNLRs. And in general, in terms of sponsorship, we never had sponsorship, not since the sixties I suppose. The sponsor programme has a long history yet bringing it back in was a change, so you have to get the right person.

PH: They're just bookend sponsorship, they're not embedded in the programmes?

EH: Yea, they're not the type of Galtee Sausages bringing you this piece of music - so there's a different style to it.

PH: I image that a lot of Radio 1's sales are through the agencies, you're hardly going out directly to the advertiser selling to Clerys or whatever?

EH. No, no. It's all agencies. I think we have a London person who does a couple of direct sales and we've one or two here. But no, it's almost all agency work.

PH. Can I ask you to discuss the process involved in Scheduling. As far as I was aware, there used to be a Planning, a Proximate and Actual Programme Schedule.

EH: There's two schedules.

PH: On the way in I saw Joe Taylor talking with Anne-Marie O' Callaghan, Development Editor. And I thought is he pitching an idea? Does pitching go on?

New programme ideas

EH: Yes, pitching goes on all the time. I've about three ideas there from this morning, just by chance. And people saying Christmas proposals, a series of this and we get things in the post all the time. Just to go back to the schedule, we have an A and a D schedule, a four-week and a eight-week schedule. But they work mostly to keep everything in the right order, The Guide, listings, the Switching Centre so they know that John Creedon is actually not on, it's actually Ronan Collins, so [don't] switch everything over to Cork because there's not going to be anyone in Cork. All that sort of stuff in advance. We're now working for the end of October, and we've finished the Bank Holiday. It's a weird sense, because you live your life in some kind of future space. Like I feel Halloween is well over. We've done that like and now it's Christmas and we are having a Christmas meeting today and this is October 11th!

Appendix C: Interview with 'Ashley'

Interview with Ashley real name 'EK'

PH what's your earliest memory of listening to with the radio?

EK My earliest memory, I'll located for you, would have been in the kitchen of the house. compared to, say my friends at school whose parents would have always listened to in the car on the way to school in the morning. by parents refused to have radio on in the car in the morning Times because they referred to that has been talking time. and the radio was always on in the kitchen.

PH of what station did you listen to when you're a teenager?

EK. Definitely 98 FM. Than that was the only what I used to really listen tando. And I was never really into those late night call shows that people used to do. I did ballet so was very much into classical music. I used to listen to RTE's station just before it became lyric. I had that tuned in on my Walkman and I used to listen to that in bed.

PH in terms of the types of shows, was it 98 FM?

E_____ K_____. I used to listen to 98 FM and because they weren't really segregated -- like you know the way now you to know for a certain programme -- all the shows sound that the same and we went really geared towards that. So you didn't particularly tune in to hear any particular show you just had switched on to hear some popular music. And 98 FM really strike me as being popular music, you kind of regarded 2 FM as being like radio 1.

PH if I must ask you to name some of your favourite songs, what kind of songs which to remember?

E_____ K_____. When I was going to college, it was the U2, Aha all the time. I suppose when I was in my teenage years, it was very much about bands that had a view its and then they were gone. My sister who was already on the sheet now the Thirties, they might have had groups that they followed for years. But for me and people I knew you didn't have that. Hot house flowers came and went.

PH do you think that what to listen to when you were younger as any bearing on or influence on what you know listen to?

E_____ K_____. You grow up and your tastes change. I kinda grew out of music and turned to listen to talk radio. I mean just in your daily routine, you might not have time to read paper so the only way to find their what's going on the world is to listen to current affairs or talk radio. If I can, I'll read paper -- but I don't get the

chance I listen to talk radio. Which is the much better way to spend time than listening to say, the top ten.

PH what are oldies to you?

E_____ K_____. Other tropical for the Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Slim Whitman, I wouldn't go for rock-and-roll, I wouldn't go for the Beatles.

PH where did you get the reference point for those particular artist's?

E_____ K_____. From my parents.

PH do you often hear songs in the radio that into the back to a particular event,

E_____ K_____. Yes, you often would. You say to yourself "to remember that song from when we travelled". All I Want Is You, I always remember that, I was in first year school when that came out. Although once the remember what year the came out and you associate your location back to when you heard it first.

PH what's about classic summer songs?

E_____ K_____. It would have been Green Day. When I was in America say 94, that would have been what people listened to. When I was in Ireland only a, you used to watch Pat Sharp on MTV.

PH what you think of music played on radio 1?

E_____ K_____. It would depend upon the programme. I think some programmes very strong others are very weak. I think, talk show hosts, kind of for example the morning programmes on 40 radio 1, they should stick with what are good at and stop sticking songs in that have nothing to do with the programme. For me and people like me in my Thirties, music is very particular. So why you might like what are talking about on the subject that are talking about -- in the sunken son that you don't like you'll switch off and you might not go back to radio 1. So while playing those songs you're losing your listner. Whereas in the evening, the likes of The Mystery Train, you could sit listening to that for hours and you just to your ironing or at your work because the presenter or producer of whoever put the programme together has put forward into the music. So in my opinion, daytime programmes should stick what are good at and not put in music.

PH do you think that the music DJs on radio go about their job?

E_____ K_____. I now think they are so bland so boring and have such an easy job. Some of them don't even choose -- especially in the commercial stations -- what they get to play. They go in and the list is done for them in the computer! And they get paid for doing the work. I mean anybody who can talk can do what they're doing.

There is no input into it. I know a DJ who works for Dublin Country 106 and he brought me in and showed me around for a look - and I was absolutely gutted to see a computer screen and everything all laid out on a computer screen. He said "a zombie do it!". What's the point in having a computer being a member of the team? It made things more efficient but it really isn't inputting any personality into the show. I think for programme, for example, Late Date on RTE they pick their own music and have research about the dates and that informs the choice of music. The information informs the music as opposed to the music informing the information and I think it should be the former rather than the latter.

PH what's your take your opinion on women presenters?

E_____ K_____. There is only one female presenter of that I don't like -- and that is Marion Fanuniane. She does my head in! If she comes onto the radio -- coughing and spluttering -- I just turn it off. Other than that, it would not affect me. But she does. If I like what's going on I'll stick with it what she is the only one affect me as a presenter..

PH Is there any difference between any of the presenters now in RTE radio than say, presenters years ago.

E_____ K_____. I think there is a lot more young people on because I think some senior bosses thought that this was, so the problem of dropping listenership. I think they thought that by bringing in new blood it would raise the profile. I think it works away and not in another. You have this newness and this youngnes. They pick somebody whose name is known as they say "let's have for as a radio presenter". There shouldn't just really go for big names. They should go for somebody who is fresh. I think they usually go the lazy route. They are picking people as opposed to picking people were trying to get in and who are enthusiastic and eager and maybe have talent that they don't know about.

PH what about Ryan Tuberty?

He is very good. He was very good at doing quick inserts into another show but he is not geared to host the show. And he loses me when he puts on his music. My parents who were in the Fifties would prefer not be listing somebody in their thirties because they are living with people in their house who were in their thirties. When he was on 2 FM all my friends loved him. It's the working it's definitely not working!

PH for most radio stations play back-to-back music without the presenter talking, what do you think about that?

E_____ K_____. Most radio stations play at, actually! I would disagree that they play music back to back. I seem to get ads has all the time. But I'm not getting that. I'm getting ads all the time. As regards the commercial stations, they are not my cup of tea. I like shows like Late Date where you get a bit of education as well.

PH what primarily do you turn the radio for now?

E _____ K _____. I'd be more driven towards if I know what's on. If I know the news is on then, if I know that Seascapes is on, I turn it on. I just absolutely love Seascapes and I'm not from a family that loves boating or yachting but I just love that programme. And I kind of think that as an island nation we should all know something about that.

PH If radio was gone tomorrow as a medium or an entity, what would you miss most about it?

Lena Keany. I would just had this huge gap with reality. My life would be like; getting up in the morning, going to work, going to the gym, there would be no external element or dimension to my life. It would be so awful. It would be dreadful. I would feel so alone. Radio provide company.

PH what do you have your car radio precept to?

E _____ K _____. I have radio 1. 2 FM. 98 FM. FM one of four. Spin and when I hit to my second set I have: RNG, lyric FM and longwave 252.

PH what makes good or compelling radio for you?

E _____ K _____. Some times be listing to lyric and you hear of his music good to hear it on till the end. When it comes to go the news I'd be flexible about turning off because you know they can listen to again in an hour or two hours time. Usually the news is doesn't change that much. If you were listing to for example in interview with somebody you might stay in the car and listen to it.

PH who are the best presenters in radio, and why?

E _____ K _____. I wouldn't really know the names of the DJs on the commercial radio stations in these days. I couldn't tell you who would be strong or not strong. I like Ian Dempsey on today FM. I used to adore Emily O'Reilly when she was on Radio Ireland. I liked Brian Mc Coll [aka Nails Mahoney] on 2 FM when he was on Breakfast, he was very good and then they just took him off altogether. On Radio 1, I think that Val Joyce is great on Late Date, I love listing to him. And I do like Pat Kenny and Joe Duffy and I can take or leave any of their newsreaders.

PH. What attraction goes or RTE Radio hold for you, if any, over other non-RTE radio stations?

E _____ K _____. Information. It's just that its informative. I'm not saying that it's the best that they can do. What they are providing is information that really isn't anywhere else. It's definitely not on today FM.

PH. RTE is funded by the licence fee and by on air commercials, and the other radio stations are financed only by what advertising they can sell airtime for, what do you think of this system of financing, to think it's fair?

E_____ K_____. I don't think it's fair any more when there is so much choice. When there was less choice, it probaby was fair, but not any more. The fact that they have a responsibility to have a public service broadcasting station for this nation, I think that's an old story. I think probably everybody should be competing on the same level. And maybe you should pay an annual fee that is dispersed. I certainly don't think RTE should be mollycoddled over the other stations..

PH. What about the sponsorship that you can hear an RTE radio. What's your opinion that?

E_____ K_____. I just think it's dreadful. The first week I heard heritage during Marion's programme. The news was on hand and then, they said "and here is the weather brought you by Glen Dimplex" and I just thought "what on earth is going on here?" And then they did the weather managing go at the end and I just thought they'd lost the plot. It's all about money. I was disgusted, I really was. I think the fact that they are doing that, gives people like me the right to say "we shouldn't be paying them the licence fee any more and nobody else" because there now competing in the same sphere as the others, it's becoming commercial for them. They are really going to do themselves out of it in the end.

PH should RTE Radio produce their programmes differently if comparison to what other radio stations are doing?

E_____ K_____. Absolutely. Most other programmes in the evening are about death or diseases and it's very morbid. And I think that the Mystery Train is far too long. They only put education programmes on coming around to the Leaving Cert. The should be doing these all year round. There's only one Arts Show in the afternoon, there should be an arts show on in the evening as well. It's just repeated night, there should be different arts show on at night. It's just pure laziness I think.

PH what radio station do you think provides the most competition to radio 1 in Dublin?

E_____ K_____. Nothing! I don't think that today FM is even at the races.

PH what radio station is the most popular in Dublin, do you think?

E_____ K_____. I would say FM one of four. And I don't listen to it -- but I tell you why. I have a friend who has a business and he is doing as on the FM one of four for the last 12 months and I get texts and e-mails on a daily basis saying "I just heard

your friend advertising on FM one of four". And it seems that everybody else in the whole of Dublin is listening to FM one of four.

PH. What he thinks it separates what makes RTE Radio different from the other Dublin stations?

E _____ K _____. Well, it's easy to find for a start. I know exactly where radio 1 is. And on today FM, the guy who took over from Eamon Dunphy (Matt Cooper) he just argues with everybody. I don't want to sit in the car and listen to people arguing. They are properly trained better in RTE. Those other stations don't want any money into training, they'll hire you and expect you to know what you're doing. I feel that the content is better on RTE radio, it's not streets ahead but it's better.

PH. If I was to mention the phrase Public Service Broadcasting, what does that mean to you?

E _____ K _____. It goes back to what was saying about, they have a responsibility. RTE Radio had a responsibility to broadcast not what's just popular. So for example not just music as the audience need to hear news, they need to hear current affairs, and things like that. And I agree. If somebody is doing that, then they are entitled to claim of the licence fee. But RTE radio are not doing any more. That's my understanding on that line at the moment.

PH if I was to say to you, what's the difference between 2 FM and today FM, if any?

E _____ K _____. Well, there is more current affairs programmes on today FM. Today FM is trying to provide a little bit of what Radio 1 provides. But on the music level, they're completely different. Today FM would sell itself better so you would know what music programmes were coming on. I think people are more educated as to the slots on today FM.

PH What's your opinion in terms of 2 FM with regard to public service broadcasting?

E _____ K _____. It's a waste of space. It's just a waste of space. It's not providing anybody with anything other than music.

PH leaving RTE Radio out of the picture, what's your general opinion about the Dublin based stations.?

E _____ K _____. I think it's pretty bleak. Sometimes you just wait to go out of Dublin onto your driving to Galway or Cork to put something different Or interesting. The Dublin stations are so boring. I don't want to listen to music all-time or ads.

PH. To you ever listened to BBC radio stations?

E ____ K _____. No don't actually, ever. My parents never headed on. A lot of other houses at a visit have BBC radio on.

PH. Do you think that the other in on RTE radio stations should be allocated funding from the licence fee if they are willing to: the types of programmes at 40 radio have on?

E ____ K _____. Yes, definitely. Not even if they were doing Public Service Broadcasting but if they were going to provide education programmes in what they do. So for example, they could do more of Dave Fanning type programming. I think they should be entitled to the fee. Absolutely. But they shouldn't be entitled to fee for just play a run of songs. And it could work that they wouldn't have to play as much advertising if they were getting fee and it would have more space for just a more education for the young people listening. Dave Fanning interviewed Cold Play and played five of their songs and you find out a bit of the background about the songs. So of other stations were to put on that type of programming instead of just back-to-back music then I would support it. If they were to put on insightful music shows then they would not have to do any those chat shows in the morning. Bands have followings, bands have interesting things to say. Then I would listen to the station. I remember driving home listening to a documentary about Phil Spector and I thought myself "if any station was doing this type of thing, then they would have me" but these are all off. They could have that on all day and the day would have loads of people listening.

PH how would you know what was on schedule?

E ____ K _____. Well there is not much variety in the schedule is there? It hasn't changed too much so I kind of know what's on. By every so often I look up the radio guy in the paper. I don't buy the RTE Guide.

PH. What do you think radios gonna sound like say for example in ten years time?

E ____ K _____. I would fear that it's going more music. Like I would fear that, if they're putting on a Ryan Tubridy Ryan at the moment and he playing the Beatles at nine o'clock in the morning -- and I'm just out of bed or at the gym -- I would fear if they're starting on that, that there would be more to through to that that. There would be less education and standards slipping.

PH do you ever listened to radio through the Internet or TV?

E ____ K _____. I I have listened to RTE through a TV in a hotel.

PH. Do you listen to more or less radio than before?

E ____ K _____. Now. About the same.

PH. Do you listen to music on anything like an MP3 player or an iPod?

E_____ K_____. I don't, no. But everybody else that I know does.

PH. In terms of choice, is there anything missing from the airwaves?

E_____ K_____. I'm missing what I thought lyric FM was going to be. Again, I was kind of hoping that I would be more education and more discussion programmes. Whereas, it's lovely to turn on and listen to what's going on International Concert Hall for the next hour. And it's lovely to reach people who don't have access to the National Concert Hall but in fairness and I want to go to the national concert Hall I would have what a tickets and went along-but only to listen to it for the full hour. There is less discussion and education. Cultural stuff. But it's lyric FM -- so where is the lyric, where are the words. I mean, there is very little traditional Irish music on lyric FM. I have to go to RnG for that.

Appendix D: Interview with 'Bill'

<i>Interview with Bill (Web designer) real name 'E'</i>

P E_____, H_____ is being interviewed on the 8th August in relation to my research for radio. E_____ you're very welcome. This is obviously not for interview or anything. Can I ask you can you remember your first, earliest memory of radio, listening to the radio.

E Yeah I presume it's, two things, one would be Radio 1 being on a Sunday mass, Sunday morning, me personally listening I would have thought of as 2FM, listening to music with friends or in the car or would it be in the car. I don't have strong memory of that and then your going out a little bit lunchtime, that would be my earliest memories, of mass. I mean after that as I got older I would have started listening Radio One at lunchtime, the lunchtime news particularly in school years, secondary school years.

P (Inaudible).

E Oh God, was there a particular first memory. I could go back to say Cub Scout age which was seven or eight and there being a road caster in Dun Laoghaire and listening to the radio outside and being asked to go and I don't know, the first person in to say the name of the new whatever album got a bag of sweets or I don't know what we got but we got stickers.

P Was it 2FM or Radio 2.

E I'd say it was Radio 2, yeah.

P Okay so in term of say when you were a teenager okay, what kind of music or what sort of shows and music did you listen to on the radio?

E When again I suppose my earliest memory of it would be listening to chart shows and ones that you could ring in and play requests for, you know, requests for John or Mary out in Dun Laoghaire, that's my first recollection of that and then it was on to lunchtime news because it was always on, so we would have heard that in the background, but it was 2FM or Radio 2 really and also some of the pirate stations actually. I don't remember them particularly well but we would have, Radio Nova was still around. Don't know when that closed?

P 1988.

E And there was a neighbour of ours actually who used to run Phantom FM for a time, I think that's what it was called anyway, it was a local pirate radio station.

P (Inaudible).

E. That is a recent name again, is it, maybe I'm confusing the name but he definitely ran a pirate station from up the road from me anyway.

P You've forget the name of the guy, I might know him.

E (Laugh). Yeah I'm trying to remember now. It'll come to me.

P. But it was in '80's was it?

E Yeah, yeah it was in his garage at the back of the house so, now it would have been very late '70's, early '80's. It mightn't have been Phantom at all now that you say it I realise that's a modern station so.

- P I mean Dublin ARD, I mean there was loads of stations.
- E Freddie Doran was his name. So it might have been called something else altogether now that I think about it.
- P And he might have been called something else on air.
- E He could have been yeah, yeah. I think he was taken off the air in the end. He got drunk on air (laugh).
- P What would be then, just on this again this interview is in relation to your memories off, I'll just go off the age_____ here, you know, the stations like 98, 104 would have started up around 1989.
- E Well I do, I remember 98FM would have had a high profile because of the 'cash call' which I grew to hate with a passion and still do. Yes so I probably would have listened to them in the early years all right but I've always disliked the 'cash call' intently. It's enough for me never to support them (laugh). I just find it depressing this idea of phoning people hourly to tell them that they haven't won any money.
- P So did anything that you listened to when you were younger, does it have any or did it had any bearing on what you listen to now, do you think or can you recollect.
- E Yeah I mean I could say maybe choice of radio station as an adult would be based on what my mother listened to or what was listened to in the family house and that was always Radio 1 so I'd listen to Radio 1. In terms of music choice and that I would tend to listen in the evenings now only, I don't listen to chart radio much except on a Sunday driving and I'd listen to Dave Fanning or Tom Dunne now. I don't think that would be based so much on

teenage years as kind of as early twenties really and Dave Fanning would have had that profile anyway, TV profile as well as a radio profile, you know.

P So in terms of like music which you describe or you know you might see for oldies okay, what kind of, you can shout out names, what are oldies to you now in terms of that? Well say if somebody say to you like, you know, say you were to make a compilation of Elvis oldies or whatever and give it to somebody what would it be.

E Yeah I perceive songs from the '80's to be, yeah oldies ones whether it's New Order or cause I suppose I saw a lot of that going around at Christmas. People giving each other gifts of New Order CDs and the Cure and the Smiths, you know, stuff that maybe we were listening to but maybe didn't have enough money to buy at the time or we did and we had an old vinyl record and we don't have on CD. That would be oldie, and there's a whole category then of Larry Gogans that playing all this footage that wouldn't appeal to me.

P I meant to ask you at the start what year were you born?

E 1973, December.

P Because it's funny, cause I have a chart with the year or whatever and people tend to be kind of, the oldies are younger than them, you know referring to, it's interesting to find if you know. When I looked at my own chart I was like born in 1962 and then stuff I was (inaudible) Jesus I thought I was around in the '70's but I was more around in the '80's but the stuff I was and I was trying to think was it the advent of CD and then stuff becoming available and all that.

- E Well yeah it's funny say it I suppose if you think of Larry Gogan or any of those Golden Hours then you talking about oldies of the '60's and '50's and the (inaudible) and my mothers age group and that.
- P (Inaudible)
- E I wouldn't consider them oldies to me because I never listen to them.
- P Now in terms of the DJs that are on radio okay, would you say there's any difference to you, do you perceive any difference between what DJs like now compared to years ago.
- E On daytime radio not particularly. I think daytime radio is fairly much the same. I suppose I would notice, yeah even radio I think probably has progressed a bit, maybe there's a bit more room for independent radio, I'm not really sure of that though. I mean the likes of Tom Dunne coming through, having played in Something Happens and now being a radio DJ and he's very popular. The other daytime DJ, Ray Darcy he was a children's TV presenter. Not so much when I was a kid but when I was a student he was on TV so we followed him anyway to radio. I don't know if there's much room for newcomers to radio. It seems quite a middle age profession still but maybe it's just the radio I'm listening to, I'm not sure.
- P Now in terms of say the RTE presenters on RTE Radio 1, would you even perceive there is any difference between what they are doing now, and how they presented back then?
- E The Radio 1 presenters?
- P That they were years ago you know when you were.....

- E Yeah see I listen to them every day so it's harder to kind of map a change. I'd notice them from season to season and they are I would say, they have a fairly recognisable format all the time, whether it's even the way they report things, the way they're scripted on Morning Ireland or at lunchtime, it's a particular way. I haven't particularly noticed a difference. No I can't say that I have.
- P Okay, now you DJs or whatever, talking about the daytime ones again, music stations like Today FM how do you imagine that the DJs presenters go about picking out music for the shows.
- E Well I'm given to believe, I think I've heard it said that they're actually choosing from play lists so it's not that they get to pick anything out. I think I've seen a report on TV where they show the computer system that compiles - based marketing information which is distressing really - but it probably stands to reason in terms of hearing the same thing again and again. I like to that in the evenings then whether it's Tom Dunne or maybe less so Dave Fanning, he's a earlier time, but some of the late night evening programmes that they do pick their own and that they're influenced by, you know, up coming trends whether it's Music Maker or whoever that they are trying to maybe make the next or predict next big thing.
- P In your head is there a lot of people there. (Inaudible) just randomly picking stuff (inaudible). Most music stations today like 98 or 104 play what's referred to as back to back music, have you ever heard of that, you know, where music is sort of, you know, music is sort of, you know, without any DJ interruption. What's your take either way on that, you know, in terms like you're listening to radio, music playing.
- E Ah it's my clear preference to have music and more music and more music particularly because of the DJs that they have on 98FM and 104. I find the chat radio on most radio stations to be particularly inane so yeah I prefer back

to back. There would be a few exceptions. I quite like again maybe going back to the likes of Today FM, Tom Dunne has a musical background and he does interviews or that it can be good and there are a few women DJs on a well. I don't particularly know their names, late at night who again will interrupt a bit but yeah for the most part I prefer a regular music format. Another exception would be in the morning, what's his name, Ian Dempsey's Breakfast Show, you know, I enjoy that format change to have comedy in the middle, Gift Grub or whatever.

P Speaking about the hear and now okay what primarily do you turn on the radio for. If I was to say to you, you know, if you turned it on today or yesterday what would you have turned it on for?

E I'd say number one would be news followed by analysis of news.

P What station?

E Typically Radio 1 would be well ahead and then I would switch from that if I'm not enjoying the interview or whatever I might switch from that to Today FM or to News Talk.

P Is that in the car now?

E Yeah.

P So you preset stations?

E Yeah

P Or if you were at home would you leave it on?

- E Usually yeah. Yeah almost exclusively I might change it but generally I wouldn't, I'd leave it alone.
- P Now if the radio was gone tomorrow, radios gone full stop what would you miss most about it? Is that the news thing?
- E Yeah it would be news thing yeah cause I travel quite a bit and I have variable coverage, you know, particularly over in the West of Ireland and if you're just relying on your own CD collection or whatever it is you tend to play it a lot and it's not quite the same, it doesn't distract you the same way whereas you can drive if you listen to a radio show with some talk you can drive the length of the country and be distracted and entertained.
- P What makes for a good radio. Say you were driving somewhere and you pulled into your house and you were listening to something on the radio and you say 'Jesus' I can't get out of the car until this over. What kind of stuff makes you stay (inaudible).
- E I suppose again it might just be a particular feature on a news programme or it could be a sports feature on a news programme. You know it might be Des Cahill I'd listen to occasionally, his sports phone in programme and if there was an engaging argument that I was interested in I might stay sitting in the car till that's over or make the dash and turn it on when I get inside so that would pretty much be it yeah.
- P Who would you say are the best presenters of today and why?
- E I go through the programmes in my mind. Philip Boucher Hayes on Radio 1, I find Rachel English particularly. I just don't like her voice or her manner. Philip Boucher Hayes I do enjoy his style. In the mornings I don't have any particular preference now in the mornings, Morning Ireland. I would say

Tom Dunne is probably one of the better ones, I enjoy him always when I listen to him. Dave Fanning to a point and Ray Darcy I think is definitely the best at what he does. I don't get to listen to him very much cause of the time he's on but his style of radio, you know, anyone else whose doing it annoys me and he doesn't.

P And have you heard of Ryan Tuberty?

E Yeah I know Ryan Tuberty. I liked Ryan Tuberty on Radio 1. I hate him, I didn't listen to him much on 2FM because I didn't like him and now I get to hear him back on Radio 1 in the mornings and I hate him or at least I hate listening to the way he presents shows at the moment. People have said that he'll mature but I don't think so, I think he's awful, really awful. I don't think he's working, he's now a cousin of yours or anything (laugh).

P No.

E But I would tell him (laugh), I don't enjoy.....

P What attraction does RTE radio hold over for you than non RTE radio?

E News coverage has to be the number one. They have the best news coverage. I suppose, yeah, maybe just a more intelligent radio generally speaking, not all the time, apart from that I simply wouldn't listen to them for music in particular. I'd switch. So it would have to be news.

P Now RTE radio.....

E Now sports included in that by the way sorry.

P Are you a big sports fan?

- E No that's the thing I wouldn't be a huge sports fan but I keep up-to-date but it's not that I wouldn't be supporting a soccer team, I'd support the Dubs and I'd listen to the Championship throughout the Championship season but probably wouldn't follow the league in GAA. Yeah but I just enjoy their sports coverage.
- P Now RTE is funded by a licence fee, okay, and commercials, and other stations are financed solely from on air advertisements okay, what do think of this system of financing, do you think it's fair?
- E Yeah I do yeah.
- P In terms (inaudible) sponsoring RTE radio like the weather forecast, and there's the odd show, business show whatever, what's your take on sponsorship of programmes.
- E I don't have any particular problem with it. I know the jingles or whatever before the weather forecast, I think they got rid of them did they, maybe.....
- P No there's some back on I think.
- E Okay yeah, well they certainly haven't interfered in my, yeah they did annoy me at one point, it was like they embarrassed the broadcasters as much as anything else but I think that's just a case of trying to get it, do it well. I don't have any problem with say the Eircom sponsoring the TV forecast so, if you just have to be maybe careful of how they present it on Radio 1.
- P Should RTE produce their programmes radio programmes differently in comparison to what other stations have on the air?

- E. Yeah, yeah, that's I would have thought that's why you'd have a licence fee.
- P In Dublin what station do you think poses the most competition to RTE Radio 1?
- E Today FM.
- P What's stations are the most popular in Dublin do you think?
- E Yeah in Dublin, I suppose the question is as opposed to popular with me and my own circle of friends (laugh). I'd say Radio 1 still is or certainly some of the shows on Radio 1. After that probably Gerry Ryan on 2FM. I don't know, Today FM might come next and then 98FM, I'm not sure maybe 98FM are next.
- P Yeah.
- E Yeah so that's what I think.
- P RTE Radio 1, 30%, then down the line you have, well next you have 104 at 20%.
- E Oh right.
- P 98, 19% they swap over each year and then you have maybe have Today, (inaudible) or News Talk.
- E Yeah.
- P 5%. What do you think makes RTE Radio different from the other stations, Dublin stations?

- E I think it always comes back to national coverage and maybe a little bit in terms of heritage as well. They're building on a very long tradition of radio, so maybe it comes back to your first question, my memories, there is a present of RTE in the households you know, national coverage as well.
- P Okay now if I was to mention a phrase to you 'public service broadcasting' what would that phrase warrant to you.
- E I suppose national responsibility, public service. I mean, I think of RTE, I think of the BBC, I think of, I suppose, having responsibility to serve the community which means they can't just pick on one particular radio format or one particular radio audience so it's serving the community.
- P Serving.....
- E Serving the community yeah.
- P What would you say the difference if any for you between say Today FM and RTE 2FM?
- E Between those two, I see them fairly close. Yeah very little actually between those two stations. I would see that maybe 2FM has, you know, they maybe have a higher visibility in terms of outside broadcast units but very little difference apart from that. I listen to Today FM. I prefer Today FM I would have thought to 2FM or maybe tradition or history, track record, they've been around longer so they have some high profile DJs that, but Dave Fanning would be one of the few ones I'd care for.
- P Okay. And I was going to ask you if you listen to Today FM, what's your opinion on Today FM?

- E I do and I think they're an excellent station. I'd listen to Ian Dempsey to a certain extent in the morning. I'd probably listen a little bit more if it didn't compete directly with news coverage in the morning and Ray Darcy I enjoy and Tom Dunne I enjoy and even some of the Sunday programmes when I'm travelling. Yeah so good station.
- P Now leaving RTE aside, what's your opinion on the Dublin stations?
- E I think a lot of it comes down to the DJs because the choice of music isn't markedly different but I can't stand some of the DJs on a lot of those stations particularly when they've two of them talking to each other, I don't know what it is but (laugh).....
- P Like these breakfast show presenters.
- E Breakfast show presenters and they have them on at different times of the day and they have them on in the evenings as well, you know, that when you get into a taxi and you have to listen all of the people just out of the 'Joy' (laugh).
- P So do you ever listen to any of the BBC stations?
- E No, no, once, I could remember, I could count the times in my hand in the last few years. Yeah.
- P You're not really attracted to them.
- E Well I don't know. It might just be that I haven't found them on the FM band in my car but no, no.

- P Do you think that other non-RTE stations should be allocated funding out of the licence fee?
- E I don't think so with conviction. I wouldn't have a problem with it if there was some allocation, yeah. I wouldn't have a difficulty if some of the other stations had a public service broadcasting hour or whatever that they felt they should but I'm not sure how it would work in practice.
- P Yeah. It's going to happen.
- E Is it.
- P Say in ten years time, what do you think radio will sound like in ten years time?
- E Very similar, will it? I don't see, I can't see any huge change, having said that, yeah, no I can't see any huge change. You'd be concerned with the same way TVs going that be there would be more and more advertising so that's what I don't want to see happening. Apart from that I don't know that there has been such a huge change, has there, to be? (laugh), I don't know.
- P Do you ever listen to radio via the TV or internet?
- E By the internet yeah at lunchtime, I have it inside so I'll turn on the news quite often at lunchtime. By TV no, I can be I don't.
- P Do you think you listen to more radio now than you used to?
- E Yeah, yeah but that's probably because I'm driving more than I used to.
- P Okay. Do you ever listen to music on anything like an MP3 iPod.

- E Yeah I just recently had an iPod in the home so yeah but only in the last couple of months.
- P Okay. In terms of choice is there any type of station you think that's missing from the airways.
- E God I didn't give Lyric a mention at all but I barely listen to them (laugh). No I don't particularly. I do find a lot of the stations very pop driven but I don't know whether there's enough of a market for people with the same taste in music. I mean I'd like to have more of the music that's played late at night on, what do we call it, independent music, indie music if you like played during the day so yeah if a station did that great.
- P That's probably what you call upcoming Phantom FM (inaudible).
- E That's it.
- P Radio 1 puts on a summer schedule when some of the prominent presenters go on holidays for a few weeks, for instance Gerry Ryan on 2FM. What do you think about that? Do you think, you know, what do you think the reasons for that is or do you prefer to have a break from presenters?
- E Yeah, do I have a problem, I'm aware of it, it probably doesn't do any harm. I'd say it probably refreshes them when they come back and it does give other people an opportunity, cause I'd say it's very hard to make a break in radio. There not always great choices but I mean it's probably preferable that somebody gets a few months of the summer and, rather than getting a year at a time. I'm trying to think of who does it. I don't like some of the ones they've picked. I think your one Breda O'Donohue has been on, ah who are the other ones. Evelyn O'Rourke hasn't really been great I don't think but

apart from that, Derek Davis I think, I don't know if he, he's often pulled back. I don't know whether he's back at the moment.

P Okay what types of programmes would you like to hear more on RTE Radio?

E Yeah I'm trying to think now what I'd have more of. Personally I'd like more music aimed at me but I don't know whether that necessarily a good thing for Radio 1 to do cause it's.....

P You never mentioned your man John Kelly on Radio 1.

E Yeah John Kelly. I did listen to him quite a bit. He changed his times, that's the Mystery Train, yeah I enjoy him well enough all right. Now it can be a bit hit and miss but that's part of the gig with him all right and he's had some people in, who did he have instead of him, I've listened to them a little bit.

P (Inaudible).

E Would I have more of John Kelly? Yeah I wouldn't mind more of John Kelly. To be honest they have me fairly well covered. They have me in the morning. I would maybe change 5-7 Live a little bit, I don't quite like, I think that's one of the reasons Today FM and maybe News Talk to an extent interfere and win listenership from them. I don't know what it is about the format but it just doesn't seem to work particularly well. It's a bit predictable all the time and I think maybe it's partly the presenters fault.

P Rachel English.

E Rachel English and yeah maybe some of the others of well yeah.

P So I know you're probably from Dublin are you?

E Yeah.

P But if you were going down the country what do you think of the other stations outside Dublin, have you come across any of those stations?

E Yeah I have come across them and they serve a very local purpose. My wife's from Dungarvan and WLR is what's tune and they listen to the death and they listen to the sports coverage and they know all the presenters the way I know the Radio 1 presenters and I think if I lived down there I possibly would listen to them as well. They're fine. Actually I enjoy listening to some of them. I think some of the ones in the West of Ireland now would be a bit challenging during the day time, you know, the radio programmes going out to all the people in the hospitals and it's not really (laugh) what I need to hear.

P Part of RTE's obligation is to provide a range of programmes that are distinct and diverse and appealing to whether minorities or to everybody, do you think that it broadens this or that it's reaching.

E Yeah give me the two classifications.

P You know distinctive, diverse.

E I think it does and I think it tries harder to do that than any other radio station and that means that it's not always going to appeal to me because it's not aimed at me. Yeah I'd be aware of quite a few of the programmes. It's funny I listen to some of the quirkier ones as well. I'd listen to Farm News, I'd listen to the, what's the shipping one, with your man in the evenings.

P From Cork.

- E. Yeah.
- P Tommy Mc Sweeney.
- E No not Tommy O’Gorman.
- P McSweeney.
- E Yeah, yeah I don’t know why but I just enjoy it occasionally so.
- P Yeah and that’s why I asked you like in terms of say RTE because 2FM (inaudible) got major criticism that 2FM is just mainly a mainstream broadcaster.
- E Oh it is yeah.
- P And it’s not doing anything (inaudible) a phenomenal success, they could have all the big DJs and could have invented today music, hip pop and all that.
- E Yeah
- P And you know in the back of it they said ‘well we’re doing this (inaudible) whereas RTE 2FM didn’t take any licence fee or whatever and it’s just really cash cow a for RTE for media rights as well. You were saying that radio, now obviously you would say that, you know, being into (inaudible). Well anyway there’s a national station coming up for offering, it’s the Causeway National Station of Ireland, working at different frequencies really national coverage (inaudible) might go for it.
- E 106.

- P What do you think of another national station?
- E Em, I could see how any one of the pop stations could compete nationally. I wouldn't particularly want them but I wouldn't have any great objection to them. I don't know that there's a need for anyone else doing what RTE doing or Today FM. I think Today FM and 2FM have it fairly well covered but having said that, what's the one Beat FM, is that in Cork?
- P It's a regional one.
- E Munster, yeah, yeah, they seemed to have good music on whenever I'm down there.
- P But actually rolling out, there you have regional, there's three rural rolled out, one for Leinster, whatever.
- E Yeah no harm. Actually really what I'd want is something different so there is a bit of a choice. You can switch between them. So the last thing I'd want is another Today FM, another 2FM, I'd want something quite different again.
- P I can tell you're a very discerning listener.
- E Thank you (laugh). I spend a lot of time in the car (laugh).

Appendix E: Interview with ‘Caroline’

<i>Interview with Caroline (Lecturer) real name ‘S’</i>

- P The most awkward question I have to ask you is what year were you born?
- S 1970. It’s my birthday this week Pat so right now I’m a year younger than I will be in a few days time.
- P This week is it.
- S Yeah.
- P Excellent. So I’m going to ask you your first or earliest memory of listening to the radio.
- S Poparama on a Saturday morning in the very early 1980s. It would be 1980 or 1981. Dermot Langan, and I can’t remember the woman.
- P Ruth Bucannon was it?
- S Yeah it was actually.
- P So that was 2FM then.
- S It was.
- P And was that back in Mayo you were listening to her.
- S It was. I used to be in hospital a lot and there were no TVs in hospital so I just had a small radio so it would have been Mayo/Galway.

- P Okay.
- S The rural Ireland.
- P So when radio was on at home what were your parents listening when it was on at home. Can you remember anything they used to listen to.
- S No my parents wouldn't have. Both my parents worked outside the home. They wouldn't have been at while we were awake as children at all so it would have babysitters and even then, we were outdoor as kids we were never indoors as kids.
- P So in terms of when you were a teenager what stations or shows did you listen to?
- S Always 2FM. Sometimes I say always and I'm about to contradict myself, Atlantic 252 was big too for a while.
- P So can remember some of your favourite songs that you grew up with like what kind of songs do you remember years ago.
- S Well in the very early 80s Poparama I always remember Shut up in your Face. So that would be February 1981 if I was to pin it down. Mike Oldfield Moonlight Shadow. I'm trying to think of other songs. It would be real 1984 stuff, the Commodors. I don't know typical 80s stuff, Wham, the Cure, different things like that.
- P Yeah. So in terms of what you used to listen to when you were younger okay, does it have any bearings on what you're listening to now?

- S Yes and no. Not particularly on the radio. I used to buy a lot of tapes as a teenager and I would still listen to them now. The radio would have given me more variety that I would never have dipped into had I not been listening to the radio. I heard a lot of different songs from the radio and I certainly wouldn't have bought tapes from some of the records that I grew to love if it wasn't for radio.
- P So I was going to ask you like what would be regarded as oldies and you've mentioned those songs like Wham. Would they be oldies to you now?
- S No my kind of oldies that I would much rather listen to would be things like Meat Loaf or Led Zeplin, Stairway to Heaven, or Queen, things like that.
- P A little bit before your time.
- S A little bit before that.
- P Do you think the DJs are different now than they were back then?
- S Very.
- P And how would you describe that?
- S Very different. They have changed with the times for the most part. I'm not really into music shows anymore so it would be an unfair comparison in some ways but they've had to move with the times. Dave Fanning for example, I would have always loved listening to his show in the evenings and I don't know if it's me getting older but he seems to have quickened the pace. He's gone much faster and I think you have to quicken the pace if you think of Ryan Tuberty and a few of them. You know they're just wackin' on and obviously it's a strategy or I assume it is.

- P And if I was to ask you like the RTE presenters like in terms of, not the DJs now, people like Ryan Tuberty do you think there's a difference between what his approach was or is and Gay Brynes approach or whatever. Is there different approaches now?
- S Yes I think it's a different approach and a different style. I haven't had the pleasure of listening to Ryan Tuberty since he moved to a different slot. I used to listen to the Breakfast Show coming in before that and he was more inclusive of a team, you know, they'd have a laugh in the team. Gaybo was just Gaybo and he was never my kind of thing.
- P In terms of the radio presenters that play music okay, whether it's 2FM or RTE Radio 1 how do you imagine that they actually pick the music that they play on the radio?
- S Personally I'd imagine that I don't really listen to RTE radio anymore but I'd imagine that there's some producers somewhere with a song list that they have to chose from or else stick to, I very much doubt that it's there personal choice but you know I could be wrong.
- P Most music stations say for example the Dublin stations play back-to-back without the presenter talking in between the records. What do you think of that? Do you prefer to have presenters talking or not talking or does it make any difference?
- S I prefer back-to-back music for a while. Maybe four songs back-to-back and then a bit of talk. I detest when they cut off the end of a very good song with their useless monotone voice. It kills me and that would make me switch radio stations for weeks on end if they really ruin a good song. Back-to-back four songs would be enough. I detest this long winded no presenter at all but on

saying that it depends on the music you know this thump, thump, thump stuff doesn't do it for me.

P Speaking about the here and now what do you primarily turn the radio on for?

S I turn the radio on for the shows I will not miss for love nor money and they would be Sunday morning listening to the Sunday Business Show on Tod and the Sam Smith Show – The Sunday Supplement on Today FM.

P The Sunday Supplement.

S That's it.

P On Today FM.

S Today FM from 10.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. I take the phone off the hook and I will not answer the door. Normally mid-week I would have my radio tuned to Today FM. I get up at 5.30 a.m. so from 5.30 a.m. until 7 a.m. I would listen to whatever is on and it would tend to be Annmarie Kelly primarily.

P So if radio was gone tomorrow what would you miss most about it, is it those shows?

S Those shows on a Sunday, yeah.

P I must tell her that when I see her (laugh). In terms of what makes for good radio, if you were listening in the car say and you were going to pull up somewhere what would make you sort of stay listening and not turn off the radio. What kind of stuff?

S Anything that doesn't include phone in audiences. I drive a lot, home quite a lot and that's a four-and-a-half hour journey and this crap of phone in audiences

for competitions for ridiculous, you know, trying to figure out what the song is or this kind of rubbish that kills me. I would much rather listen to absolute drivel of a presenter than Joe public. If I want that I'll go onto Liveline, you know.

P Who do you think are the best presenters on the air and why?

S I adore listening to Sam Smith because he's a hoot on a Sunday and his panel tend to be good. Annmarie Kelly is great in the morning, she's, herself and Ruth Bucannon are probably the only two female presenters whose voice I can tolerate because for some reason women's voices just don't sound good on the radio. I absolutely hate high-pitched women's voices on the radio. It goes through my head. Other than that one of the most superb shows - but I'm usually at work and I miss it - is Moncreaff in the afternoon. He's absolutely super and I could listen to him all day. George Hook while I detest his voice and I don't always understand the words he uses because he breaths too heavily while speaking and you know I don't catch it, his opinion is good. I like his show.

P So in terms of when you do listen to the radio then it's very early in the morning, the Sunday period. Do you listen it at night?

S Rarely.

P Okay and in the car do you have presets in the car or.....

S I do.

P What stations are they set to?

S I have Today FM, News Talk, RTE 1, RTE 2 and 104.

- P Now what attraction, I mean you seem to listen to a lot of radio, not exclusively RTE, but I was going to ask you what attraction does RTE radio, if it does hold any attraction for you over RTE stations or other non RTE stations, does it hold any attraction for you.
- S It does actually. When I'm travelling home sometimes I get sick of, I really don't like Ray Darcy's show, therefore they have a prime target for me to flick and Ryan Tuberty does that nicely actually so it was a good move for that if I wasn't at work during the day. Can you just repeat the question?
- P In terms of like does RTE hold any attraction for you over other non RTE stations.
- S I would always try RTE first and I think that's because of memories more so than anything other than that. You know, it brings me back. If I'm travelling around mid-day, I forget his name but I love his show, the Cork man.
- P John Creedon.
- S I think he is just super and what really makes it for me is that he refuses to make requests for anybody unless their overseas or, you know, it has to be very particular criteria which means he's not going on and on about requests for mammy and daddy and all that rubbish and that's good and he's witty with it. He's good and he introduces each song. It's sort of comforting to hear the music of one's youth being played.
- P Now RTE radio, the same as television, is funded by the licence fee and on air commercials. Other radio stations are financed solely from on air advertisements. What do you think of this system of financing, is it fair?

- S I think it's fine because without RTE radio, I mean they're always there to flick to. Okay, if you want choice you can flick to the others and certainly they have good shows but I think there is a major need to have definitive radio station for the masses and I don't mind that my license fee pays that.
- P Okay. Should RTE radio produce their programmes differently in comparison to what other stations have on the air?
- S It's a tough one because they have a very good variety as they are to be fair. I mean Lyric isn't my kind of thing and they seem to have that sown up and Radio na Gaeltachta isn't certainly my kind of thing. Radio 1 and 2, are, the difference between them from my perspective seems to be less and less all the time and I think that's a shame. It would be far better if they targeted them for whatever targeting them for. This mainstream, kind of, mid position for both of them almost duplicates and therefore, I don't know, kind of dilutes there effect.
- P Very good. In Dublin what station do you think provides the most competition to RTE Radio 1?
- S Off the top of my head I would say for my age group News Talk but I'd imagine the Rock 104, whatever it is called would be a good competitor too.
- P So this is sort of a similar question, different angle what stations do you think are the most popular in Dublin?
- S I'd like to think that News Talk and Today FM are because they would be my, probably the most ones I would listen to but I'd imagine it would somewhere between 98 and 104.
- P You're dead right. What do you think makes RTE radio different from say other Dublin radio stations?

- S It's stuffy, you know, for want of a better word and I don't know how to say anything better than that. I just think it's stuffy, the DJs are old timers, they don't have a lot to offer the youth, they're not with it with the exception of Dave Fanning and with great respect to the great man he ain't no young chick anymore so maybe they need to fill the shoes with somebody younger soon.
- P If I was to mention the phrase public service broadcasting, what does this phrase mean to you.
- S To me it means broadcasting for the masses so it's trying to please all of the people, all of the time, which is a ludicrous notion, but it's personal.
- P What would you say, do you think if there is any difference between 2FM and Today FM?
- S There's not a huge difference I would say. Today FM has more talk show content than 2FM and I could be wrong on that but Today FM does have younger DJs or presenters or I perceive them to be younger. Today FM just has more meaningful content. 2FM seems to have the same line-up does it?
- P So I was going to ask you do you listen to Today FM and what's your opinion on Today FM.
- S For me it's probably the better radio station out of all because my listenership would be the Annmarie Kelly show every morning. There's no good alternative at that time in the morning. Sunday morning the Business Supplement or Sunday Supplement and the Sunday Business Show. There's no alternative to them either. I know I flick to RTE 1 once or twice to give them a tune in because somebody told me they were good but they didn't compare.

- P So in terms of like the stations that are on air in Dublin at the moment what's your kind of general opinion on them?
- S There's definitely something for everybody but I really think that there are a lot of them trying to get the youth market with the thump, thump, thump music, non stop and you know I think they're forgetting the other markets.
- P Do you ever listen to any BBC radio stations.
- S Very, very rarely. I listened to a BBC station for the hitch hikers guide to the galaxy when it was back on a while back, last year.
- P That was Radio 4. So in the car is it or?
- S No, no at home.
- P On long wave.
- S That's right, long wave.
- P Do you think that the other non RTE stations should be allocated funding from the licence fee if they are willing to or if they put on the types of programmes that RTE radio do?
- S No I think that would be ludicrous completely because it would be mad duplication. As it is I don't think the market for what RTE are trying to give like your Lyric, your Radio na Gaeltachta in particular, I don't think there's a mass market for that and I think it's an important niche that should be covered for those that want it. I think that the idea that private people would get in on the game would just dilute it and it wouldn't be viable after a very short time.

- P In say ten years time what do think radio will sound like?
- S I hope it sounds as good as it does now.
- P Do you ever listen to radio via the internet or TV?
- S Yeah I do.
- P On the internet.
- S On the internet and on the TV if I'm away on holidays for some reason with satellite dish (laugh). Sometimes when you're out of the country it's easier to get it via the TV or in hotels and things like that.
- P Do you find that you're listening to more or less radio than before?
- S I would listen to probably as much as I did as a teenager. I got into radio in 1980 and I'd say then I would listen to the radio at least five or six hours a week and that's being very conservative cause I'd have listened to it far more and I would still do that now and that's really on the conservative side. I could probably do twenty hours a week.
- P In terms of say songs that you hear on the radio okay do they ever take you back to the different times.
- S Oh frequently, yeah.
- P You can remember hearing, where you were when you heard it or something.
- S Absolutely.

- P You said you were in hospital for a bit.
- S Oh that's right. I spent most of my childhood in hospital until I was in 20s and I would certainly remember some songs would put me straight into a hospital bed. Other would, you know, your first dance or you know. Different memories would always come back with music definitely. Some are good and some aren't good.
- P I was going to ask you like say a summer song okay. What songs do you would associate with summer? If somebody said to 'what do you think is a great summer song, that you remember from years ago?'
- S Summer song, I mean.....
- P The reason I ask this because I might say to a student here, oh for example the Cure and you say what's that got to do with anything. And then you realise it was actually out in the summer.
- S Well Cure aren't a band I would associate with the summer at all but they come to mind. Summer always I would associate feel good factor, kind of. Things like I suppose if I think of different bomb fire nights, you don't have bomb fire nights in Dublin. In the West of Ireland there's a bomb fire's night which is a big celebration, very big bomb fire, I think it's on the 23rd June or maybe the 21st. It's probably the 21st for the longest day of the year and there was always really great parties around the bomb fire so I mean the Commodores *Night Shift* and *Come on Eileen* or different summer songs that I would associate with memories of different years at the bomb fire would be summer songs to me.
- P In terms of choice is there any radio station missing from the airwaves do you think?

- S Oh yeah, I do. I think a radio station, I'm trying to remember the radio station, I gave it so long to do and I thought it was really going to fill the gap, Light FM or whatever you call.
- P Yeah it's Q02 now.
- S Yeah that's it. I really thought there was a need for that and I thought they were really going to do it and they did for the first year or two and then they went more of the same and it's really a shame. There is a niche for them doing what they say they'd do or else somebody else getting in there to do what they said they'd do.
- P Very good. They say they're going to do something, get the licence to do it and then shift the goalpost a bit.
- S They did for the first I'd say eighteen months to be kind but then they went into everything that everybody else was in to and it's a shame. That niche is still there.
- P So Radio 1 puts on a summer schedule whereby some of the prominent presenters go on holidays for several weeks and this probably includes Gerry Ryan on 2FM. What do you think about that? What do you think the reason is and do you prefer to have a break from them or does it make any difference to you?
- S I think it's good to give other people a chance and how else will you ever determine that there's somebody else there. Gerry Ryan blows my head that people think he's good. He's intelligent and he's smart, there's no doubt about that and I appreciate that but he condescending because he consistently tries to go for the gutter level instead of keeping it a bit higher. I think it's a good plan that they will go on holidays and give other people a chance but I think long-

term holidays isn't always a good idea for the station because once you flick, you mightn't flick back.

P What types of programmes would you like to hear more of on RTE radio?

S I like the idea, and I know they do it I think on a Sunday morning and it is Ruth Bucannon I think that I would say Playback from the week and I think that's good. If I'm in the car I would always switch that on. But I wouldn't switch from Today FM for the later shows for that because I'd be afraid I'd forget to flick back on a normal day but a few more news stories or news hours here and there of reviews of the week or whatever that you might have missed something and to review it. I think it's a good plan.

P Actually what they do now on medium wave they do that. They call it Second Helpings and they own 252 now. They were broadcasting a version of RTE at the weekend. Then there was complaints so they had to put that back to sport for overseas listeners but their 537 medium wave they do a showcase of stuff that's been on during the week. It's on Saturday and Sundays. Second Helpings it's called.

S I'll definitely tune into that now.

P Outside of Dublin right, what do you think of the Dublin stations compared to what you hear outside. Now Mayo what would be.....

S Oh Mid West Radio. It is dreadful. It's not even coming into the country channel in Dublin, you know. I mean it is brutal but it's precisely what they want, when they want it. It's local, it's got everything they want on a local basis, all the local news and everything. I mean it's huge.

P Is it too local for you?

S Oh no, when I'm at home.....

P When you go back you want to kind of get a sense of what's going on and this is the only show in town?

S Well this is where rural Ireland is different to city Ireland because you would certainly tune into it for the depth because funerals are big at home. There is a cultural difference in rural Ireland that Mid West would fill that nobody else could in fairness for the that part of the world, you know they read out the deaths on the hour and different things like that. But for me, you know, I don't know anybody in my age group or anybody else that would even tune into it for anything other than that, but my mother's generation, my grandmother's generation, I grew up in a house where there was always three generations at one time and they would have Mid West on, tuned in all the time. My father in recent years listens to Vincent Browne.

P RTE night time yeah.

S Cause there's always a row over the radio.

P So the alternative for you then would be to listen to one of the national stations then.

S Absolutely.

P Part of the RTE's obligation for receiving the licence fee is to provide programmes that are distinctive, diverse, appealing to all, appealing to minorities, this is all things to all men as you were saying. Do you think that it provides this?

- S I think they dip just their toe in the water with a lot of it. They probably skim the surface for a lot of the offerings but I think they have to please most of the people most of the time rather than all of the people all of the time. I don't think it's possible. I think it's an unbelievably stupid mandate if that is their mandate because they can't. There's so many tastes with the intercultural and diversity that is there now, there's no way they can please everybody at one time. I think they try although I would still argue that RTE Radio 1 and Radio 2 are both moving into a center domain instead of staying separate into their two identities.
- P Now this is a question I will be putting to RTE radio themselves in terms of how they get that balance right between the public service ethos and then, you know, going (inaudible). Obviously to say Today FM makes a play for the biggest audience for it's revenue and shareholders or whatever and RTE, say for example Radio 4 would put on hitch hikers guide to the galaxy in mainstream, peak time. It mightn't necessarily be the biggest audience but that's some element of public service broadcasting putting on stuff that's, people go 'oh I've heard Mozart, now I'll be interested', you know rather than be on late at night or whatever. What do you think yourself about, you know, getting that balance right. If somebody said to you would you prefer to hear more popular things during the day or would you prefer to hear more kind of, you know, stuff that might be risky or that you mightn't like but in main, in peak time.
- S Oh I think if they went risky in main peak time, you know, at least the people will see that there's a difference. I don't think they can afford to take the risks that nobody else will take and it's a shame that they don't but I don't mean go for things like comedy or go for things like plays over the radio, you know. I would be more in turn thinking of the likes of the Hitch Hikers guide to the galaxy, the likes of even linking in with foreign stations or you know to have something variety wise.

P Now there's talk of what's going to be called a national quasi license. What they mean by quasi is that it'll have, it won't have the same frequency everywhere. So like say Today FM is on 100.3 to 100.9. They might have then in the West on 89 something and up here whatever cause of the availability of frequencies but there's going to be national stations available and people are going to express an interest in that. Already News Talk said they'd be interested in it. UTV might be interested cause they have a few stations, there's a consortium with other people who are thinking about going for it. What do you think of the advent of another national station?

S Well that will soon kill an awful lot of them because there's no bloody way they'll be viable if they're looking for a national audience they're just not going to cut it so it could be blessings to RTE's ears, you know.

P What do you hate most about the radio?

S I suppose frustrating, I would find two things frustrating, first of all the fact that because of the way the licences go or the costs my employers won't let me put the radio on during the day. It would be lovely to be able to come in for the first, I start at 7 a.m. so it would be lovely from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. to be able to have a radio on in the background for company, for noise, for interest sake. It wouldn't necessarily stop me working. It's a pity that my employer would have to pay for me to be able to do that and therefore I can't do it.

P Why would he have to pay?

S I don't know is there a licence fee?

P Oh yeah in terms of a PPI licence for if you have it on in the workplace like a hairdressers or something. There potentially could be but I would imagine that

Dick Doyle and them chasing internet revenue and all that would be if they walked into say a place like the DIT, into an office where somebody has it on here, they're on sticky ground on terms of being too mean. If DIT had it on in the cold court, for example if you have it on in Dunlaoighaire shopping centre it costs you €5,000 a year. For every airplane that has radio or music playing it's €3,000 a year so there's huge revenues. So I think to have it in the workplace if it's just like in an office workplace it would be just a local, whether your man next door would be upset by it.

S Oh right, well nobody would be upset by it at that time I can guarantee you. Oh that's grand I'll bring it in again. The other thing that would frustrate me in terms of RTE radio, you know, my big gripe is that if you don't buy the RTE Guide and I don't you don't ever know what's going on RTE radio. I mean you just told me about that other show. I really think they are, that frustrates me. I wish they would do something to let people know what is going on in Radio. There's concentrate on their TV offering and it's a shame.

P That's what they call in the trade 'promos trailers' or 'signposting' and when I went into RTE looking for a scholarship for this thing and they interviewed me, one of the things they said to me when they were interviewing me 'what do you think about RTE radio?' So I let a load of things I shouldn't, too commercial, and one of the things I said to them was you don't have enough trailers, or promos or signposts. So then they actually stepped that up. 'Tonight on RTE radio', but the BBC they've junctures or junctions between programmes and they have these trailers on that would signpost for people and the two things the trailers do is one, for the likes of you to tell you 'oh I'll tune into that' and the other thing is for people who never listen say to documentaries 'well it's fantastic the BBC doing this stuff but I won't be listening to it'. But they get a sense of oh I've actually heard or something. It gives them a sense that their money is being well spent. That's a great programme that documentary about Paul McCarthy but I won't be listening to it, you know. In terms now, I've

never met a person as insightful as you about radio, the stuff you're saying, of all the people I've interviewed over the years. You're very, very perceptive.

S I wouldn't have thought so now.

P No honestly. Do you listen to iPods or MP3 players or do you listen to any music other than radio?

S I do. I listen to a lot of music. I have a lot of CDs and I still have all my own tapes so there's always music in the background.

P The old cassettes are still going.

S The old cassettes yeah, (laugh), but I had such a super collection, I have 600 odd tapes.

P Were they tapes that were, like you bought the album on tape, or did you make up tapes?

S Most of them I would have bought the album on tapes but I would certainly have made up tapes. I just love it too much to part with it. I would always have music on in the background. I'm not great into TV. Radio or music is where I'd be.

P That's fantastic. They used to call it the Dublin 4 agenda. So talk to me about that.

S No well I just think it's frustrating when you're outside of Dublin. You only ever get the weather report in Dublin, you get the traffic in Dublin or cities. What's the point in having any at all, you know, keep it broader for everybody.

P Now RTEs response to that is that, you know, (inaudible) audience and as time goes on the local stations in the local area keep consolidating and taking more of the RTE national audience you know available because they get more local and better at it. The jocks however bad they are they're better at something and every year people kind of dip into it more and more and build up this share and then RTE made a commitment for public service broadcasting when they got their licence fee, that they do more stuff in the regions, hence, John Creedon for example comes from Cork. He moved down to Cork. (Inaudible) from Cork and then they have this regional news in between the RTE main 1 p.m. news and one of our ex-students Annmarie McNerney is reading it out. So they do this regional news and you kind of say 'what the hell' you know, roads works at the council last night and whatever and then it would be something else and it's only on for about two minutes. It's a bit of a token towards.....

S But that's all it is and that's what switches people onto it.

P So when they write their next report they go 'x amount spent on the regions'.

Interview with Claire (Secretary) real name 'B'

- P. Can I ask you B_____, can you remember your first or earliest of memory of listening to the radio.
- B. I probably do yes as a child listening, my father was much older than my mother, he was an older man actually, he was in his late 60s and well we used to listen to the BBC actually. We were never allowed listen to RTE in those days so we used to listen to what was, I don't know what they called it, it's now BBC 4 but I don't know what it was previously called.
- P The Home Service.
- B Or the BBC, it might have been the Home Service, yeah and questions and answers I remember or Any Questions is what it was called. I think it may still be on but you weren't allowed speak when that was on so I remember that indeed and the news. Well RTE, Radio Éireann as it was called and in fact it was so old my father used to call it 2RM which was the nineteen, because my father was seventy when he go married so he used to call it 2RM but it was Radio Éireann as they called it then.
- P 2RN was the first name for it.
- B That's right so he sometimes would call it 2RN so that's how far back I'm going as a child and we'd listen to the news and we couldn't and I also when I went to kindergarden school I remember listening to on the BBC as you're calling it the Home Service, a Call Listen with Mother, so that's going back

when I was a child of four years, three years of age and there was a programme for children.

P So in terms of when you were younger, in terms of the shows or music, what shows or what music did you listen to on the radio?

B Well I suppose when I was a teenage it was Luxembourg, Radio Luxembourg we'd listen to. We weren't allowed listen to it at home but we'd tune in and get Radio Luxembourg so that's probably in terms of music really.

P And what kind of songs were playing on it?

B Well you see I was sort of into The Beatles and that sort of thing, Elvis Presley, 60s sort of music, that sort of stuff, rock-in-roll really in those days.

P So I was going to ask you to discuss what you listen to, you were saying it was Radio Luxembourg.

B Well Radio Luxembourg when I was sort of, I'd try to switch it over to Radio Luxembourg, tune in the old radio, big radio that we had and then we had little transistor radios but yeah it would have been Radio Luxembourg, yeah I suppose yeah. But as a child then I remember they'd have a thing called (inaudible) record it was an old classical music my parents would listen to on the radio and I suppose my ear tuned into that then and I always had an interest in classical music and I still do and I think it was tuned in as a child, you know.

P You pre-empted my next question which I was going to say, does what you used to listen to when you were younger have any influence or bearing on what you're listening to now.

- B It did yeah not the rock-in-roll stuff because that was suppose when I was in my 20s and teenage years but it does because my ear was tuned in from a young age and my mother in particular had a love of classical music. I picked up on that yeah.
- P Now in terms of like music that you regard as oldies okay, whether it's Frank Sinatra.
- B No I never listened to Frank Sinatra. My mother hated crooners, she thought they were wrong, bad. I like them now but she though crooners were bad and they were dreadful and they destroyed music.
- P Did she.
- B I actually like them now.
- P Did she listen to like the Great Opera and stuff.
- B The Great Opera stuff and the good, the John McCormacks and that sort of stuff, and the good singers.
- P Crooners would be like sort of to her Roby Williams. In terms of the DJs and not radio presenters, the actual DJs do you think the DJs are different on the radio now than they were back then.
- B Oh totally different. I'm not great that great now with this sort of thing but however I would think they are, they have a different style. Totally informal.
- P What would you say now, in terms of your perception of what you think?

- B Yeah I haven't given that much thought. I find that particular, maybe we can come back on that one.
- P In terms of say RTE presenters would you think that in terms of style or personality or whatever that they are different now than they were.
- B Oh there totally different from what they were.
- P What would you think that would be?
- B What's the major difference? They were so much formal long ago, they were very careful with the way they presented stuff and you know it's become much more relaxed now. Life has become much more relaxed I suppose, I suppose the whole world has become relaxed, Ireland in particular and they had to be careful about what they said and they were very formal and structured and they were very like the BBC, there was a BBC accent as you know and that's all gone now you know.
- P Presenters years ago used to have even dress suits.
- B That's right and they were very formal and I can't think of the names of the people long ago but they were very formal in the way they spoke, and they spoke in a particular way and one woman died quite recent, about a year ago and she had a beautiful speaking voice. They were probably very clear I think.
- P In RTE.
- B In RTE yeah.
- P She was head of presentation.

- B That's right yeah.
- P I'm not sure if you're obviously not into pop music or whatever, if (inaudible) would you say even the 2FM or any of the music stations how do you imagine the DJs pick the music for their show. How do you imagine they pick their CDs?
- B How do I imagine they do now?
- P Yeah, yeah.
- B Ah sure that's all done by research I'm sure. I'm sure they've got researchers there telling them, I'm sure they're not just doing it out of their own head are they? I would imagine no?, naturally they will have their own preferences I'm sure. I don't think they're playing all what they particularly like. They can't do that because you've got, I would imagine it's researchers know what's popular or whatever, you know or feedback that they're getting I'm sure as well from what they're playing otherwise nobody is going to listen to them.
- P Okay, well this is probably more about music stations but most of the music stations now play what they call back-to-back music without interruption.
- B They do, they do yeah.
- P Whereas RTE would still play and the BBC radio 2 would still play songs and the presenter would come in after them and talk.
- B That's right.

- P And talk and whatever and some of them say Dublin music stations play so many in a row. What do you think of that kind of.....
- B I don't like the back-to-back stuff. I prefer somebody coming in, and that's just my old fashioned way maybe.
- P Say something.
- B I do yeah and to give some background to it or say something even. I know but that's not what young people like because they're playing this back-to-back stuff but that's my preference.
- P Okay. Now if I was to speak about the here and now right, what primarily do you use the radio for now? What would you turn on the radio for now?
- B Well I just turn the radio on first thing in the morning when I wake up at 6.45 a.m. and I listen to Morning Ireland all the time even driving in the car, I get in here a little bit before 9 a.m. so I don't hear the other programmes after that but I just listen. I listen to Morning Ireland for what's current affairs, what's going on, what's happened, and the news and the weather and I'm a weather fanatic, I know the weather forecast all over the world so I'm very interested in the weather and then the next time I've got to hear the radio is when I'm driving home and I don't leave here till 7 p.m. most evenings so I don't even hear Five Seven Live, I might hear the end of it and then I go into whatever is on and I listen to it, I'll have it on, even if it's in Irish I'll listen to it.
- P And it's Radio 1 all the time?
- B It's all Radio 1 except if it's something really boring or it's some play that I don't like, I listen to plays and all the rest and they used to have plays on a Tuesday in the winter, I switch over to Lyric. I like Lyric and I love Lyric but

I never think to switch it over unless whatever is on RTE is not of interest to me but most things are. I don't particularly listen to sport.

P I haven't this down as a question but so what would you even sample any of the other stations in Dublin?

B No.

P Would you ever be tempted to?

B No.

P You're getting whatever you want off RTE 1.

B I get what I want from RTE, yeah and they're all tuned on my radio on the car and I spend a fair bit of time in the car travelling but I'll only have RTE 1 or Lyric, don't even listen to 2FM.

P Okay. Now if the radio is gone tomorrow what would you miss most on it, in terms if it was gone, is it the news?

B I'd miss the news and the current affair programmes, I would yeah. My television is hardly ever turned on. It's the radio.

P It sounds like my kind of house that I want.

B What?

P That sounds like the kind of house that I'd like to live in.

B Yeah, yeah.

- P My other half watches the television.
- B Well an awful lot of people do. I never, never look at soaps, not interested, it's unusual. I've never looked at a soap in my life, I mean they maybe on in the house but I never look at them. So I'm not interested in soap, I like as I said.
- P So to you now, what makes good radio, in other words if you're listening to radio and you were listening to something in the car and you wouldn't get out until it was over, what would that be to you?
- B Well probably an interview with somebody who was very interesting, you know, sometimes you come across these things, you know. I listen to Play Back all the time and most of the stuff that's on Play Back, they've pick out the stuff, I've heard most of it, you know, what do you call her who does Play Back, Ruth Bucannon and I listen to that most of the time I listen to Ruth Bucaonnon and she picks out the interesting bits, what they think is interesting obviously and interviews with I suppose with new, interviews with interesting people probably you know.
- P Okay if I was to say to you well this is probably regarding RTE, who are the best presenters and why do you think?
- B I think Cathal Mac Coille is good in the morning, I think he's good in Morning Ireland. I think he's a good interesting, intelligent interviewer. I like Vincent Browne, he's very controversial, you know, his private life is his own business but he gets people going. I think he gets a lot out of people. I never miss Vincent Browne in the Winter, I like him at 10 p.m. I like, I think Paddy O'Gorman is great, he's very good with people, he draws them out and he's a nice manner. I like Pat Kenny on radio, cause he's intelligent but I think he's

dreadful on the television. I think he's very good, he's a very intelligent guy and he's doing what he's best at on the radio I think but I never get to hear him by the way cause I'm working but the odd time I would. I think he's far better on radio than he is on television.

P Now obviously within RTE in last while, Marion Finnuccane is now gone to weekends and a fella by the name of Ryan Tuberty has taken over.....

B No dreadful and most people I know turn him off and I turn off.

P You don't like him.

B No. He's all over the place and he's going to continue I think isn't he.

P Yeah he's certainly going to be on from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. anyway.

B And he's got a longer..... I hear him for a few minutes in the morning sometimes. I really turn the radio off with him but most people feel that. I don't know why they put him on because he doesn't listen to people, he's all over the place, you know, and he gets it all wrong and he's coming out with his own ideas, all the time it's his views and he's jumping from one thing to the other. Now I think Marion had come to the end of her days, I thought she was great in her day and was very good for women. You know, she was one of the first women presenters and I think she's very good and I wouldn't certainly think that Ryan Tuberty is good. I think Philip Bolger-Hayes is good. I like his style, that's me now.

P So this is probably irrelevant, you know, I was going to ask to you what attraction does RTE radio hold over for you than the other non RTE stations?

B You see I don't even listen to them you know so I suppose I can't say.

- P Would you say RTE is more professional?
- B I would think it's more professional than the other stations but the other stations are for younger people really I think by and large, the other Irish stations yeah.
- P Then somebody said to me on an interview on Friday that they trust what RTE come out with in terms of the news.
- B No I don't particular trust them but they're usually right yeah, right enough and I remember as a young girl at school I remember somebody said and she shouldn't have said it, she didn't read the paper she listened to the news on the radio because she thought it was more accurate than what you'd get, which is more than the media are coming out with stuff, it is more accurate what RTE put out is probably more accurate at the end of the day. It's gossip a lot in some of the papers you know.
- P Now RTE is funded by the licence fee, this is radio now and on air commercials, other stations are financed solely through the on air advertisements, these are the stations in Dublin now, what do you think of this system of financing, do you think it's fair that RTE would be getting the licence fee and advertisements and the other non RTE kind of.....
- B I suppose it's like anything else, it's our national station and I suppose like Aer Lingus or like anything else, I suppose I don't think too much about it really but what do you do. I suppose I'm biased towards RTE so that's difficult for me to answer.
- P Okay in terms of, you're probably aware that the weather forecast is sponsored and I business too I think.....

- B Now yeah.
- P What do you think of sponsorship on programmes on RTE? Now I know years ago you had Dear Frankie.....
- B Oh I know all that sort of stuff.
- P All that stuff and slot shows and then you have shows that are kind of.....
- B That are sponsored as you say.
- P Do you think, I mean does it affect what you hear or.....
- B No it doesn't affect what I hear. It's a bit annoying the way they pump this thing out before it, you know, on the radio in particular where they pump out this advertisement all the time but it doesn't really bother me, you know, it doesn't affect what I'm going to hear after it no. I think they're very professional in what they.....
- P So you have all the other stations, you have Today FM and then the Dublin stations and whatever, I think as RTE is getting the licence fee, do you think that RTE radio should produce their programme differently in comparison to what other stations have on the air? Should they have on different programmes than other stations or.....
- B You mean.....
- P You know like the other stations are whatever say for example are playing music whatever, should 2FM be playing music as well or whatever or do you

think RTE should just do whatever it has to do and then the other stations have to find their way around that or.....

B Yeah I think so (laugh).

P If I was to say to you now, you probably don't listen to the stations in Dublin, but what station would you say provides Radio 1 with the most competition in Dublin?

B I suppose, I forget even the name of it, you know the other one?

P News Talk.

B Yes that would, I would think that provides especially at the busy slots like, the evening slot, isn't that right, a lot of people listen, I don't but a lot of people do, I know they switch over to that in the evening and that probably does provide RTE with competition.

P Okay.

B It's still away ahead I think isn't, RTE with listenership.

P Yeah, I was going to ask you what stations are the most popular in Dublin, what would you say is the most popular station in Dublin?

B Overall I believe RTE Radio 1 and 2FM are and but then it's all to do with age. I'm in the older age group, so my age group, a bit younger and older than me that would probably, it's because of the age that you listen to RTE 1 maybe younger people don't, some people do, I know, some people don't, you know.

- P Say you were again this is not on this, say what do you think it is that attracts people to RTE, is it a certain age, have a mortgage, have kids or something sort of go to RTE Radio 1, are they fed up with the music.
- B It is. I suppose older people like me don't want to hear wall-to-wall music and probably by and large more interested in current affairs and you know, it's just the age, really an age thing.
- P If I was to mention the phrase public service broadcasting, what does this mean to you now?
- B That means RTE to me you know, that's what I see as public service because yeah that's what I see it as RTE, either the radio or the television.
- P Okay if I was say to you what is the difference if any is between 2FM and Today FM?
- B I suppose that's a hard one me again because I don't listen to Today FM that much but I would imagine there is a difference you know.
- P Okay. Do you ever listen to Today FM and what's your opinion on Today FM. Dunphy was on it.
- B Was on it. I listened to it a few time and a lot of my friends said 'Lord he's great' but I don't like him I suppose really, you know.
- P And then you're opinion of Dublin stations, you don't listen to them.
- B See I don't, I'm bad for that.

- P No that's just me here. Now you mentioned in the past but do you ever listen to any BBC stations.
- B Well at the moment, I used to when my mother was alive because she loved BBC 4 and had it permanently fixed into her day.
- P And why don't you listen to it now?
- B Because actually to be honest with you I don't listen to it because it's hard to tune in on my car, I find it difficult to get the signal, I can get it sometimes but I would like it. I would love it, even my gardening programmes, I like all these various programmes and they would be better than RTE you know.
- P Yeah but it's available (inaudible) on the car or if you're living in Dublin and you have cable you can get BBC 4 through the cable, crystal clear.
- B Oh right yeah.
- P It's part of their digital service. Do you think that the other non RTE stations should be allocated funding from the licence fee if they put on the types of programmes that RTE do.
- B Probably yeah, why not if they would put on the same sort of programme, yeah why not, why should they be left out, you know.
- P What do you think radio would sound like in ten years time? Do you see any trends sort of happening?
- B Well RTE is slightly moving, like with getting this Ryan Tuberty in and they're trying to change but I suppose some of the other programmes will never change, some of those evening programmes I listen to. I was just

saying to one of the girls out there about John Kelly who's on RTE. I don't like him I'm not that keen on him but I know a lot of people even in there 30s and 40s think he's very good. He's okay. I still have him on but he drives me mad really but he's very popular I know that and I think, wasn't he head hunted, didn't they get him into RTE.

P Is there any types of programmes that you'd like to hear more on RTE Radio 1. Any types of programmes that you sort say 'give me more of that' or are missing programmes.

B Can't think off the top of my head. Well I think more of these interesting interviews I suppose, current affairs type stuff really I like. I like, I thought that guy was very good they had on a Sunday, the guy from Saint Pats, What If, what do you call him?

P Oh yeah they were doing a.....

B Forrester is it, it's not Forrester.

P What If in terms of history?

B Or if Bertie Ahearn hadn't done up, Charlie Haughey hadn't been done. I thought he was brilliant, loved him.

P It was a BBC idea.

B Was it.

P They were doing that What If on Radio 4 for the last couple of years. What If the Second World War hadn't happened?

- B Yeah what would have happened? I thought he was brilliant. He's on secondment I think from Saint Pats to, oh yeah.
- P Okay, now RTE Radio 1 puts on a summer schedule whereby some prominent presenters go on holidays for several weeks and this also includes 2FM where Gerry Ryan goes on holidays for several weeks, what do you think of this, what do you think is the reason for it?
- B I wish they didn't do that but they do but I notice that Morning Ireland doesn't. At one stage years ago Morning Ireland used to stop.
- P It starts at 7.30 a.m. now.
- B Now it starts at 7.30 a.m. and well it used to start, it's a sign of the times it used to start at 8.00 a.m. years ago but I think it actually stopped altogether years ago, you mightn't remember it, but there was no morning Ireland for the summer which I think I'm glad they do have it.
- P That's very interesting. You're probably from Dublin but in terms of stations outside Dublin.
- B See I don't listen to Kildare FM or whatever they call it.
- P Do you think the stations down the country sound different to the Dublin stations?
- B Well when I've heard them, they're just ghastly I think, very local, reading out the funerals and I heard them sometimes, you know, if you're travelling these things come in on you, absolutely dreadful but that's what the audience

obviously wants you know. Kildare, Carlow and all these Clare FMs and all these and they're very unprofessional I think.

P They are kind of aimed at the local.

B Well for the uneducated people, this is a terribly snobbish to say, well I think you know.

P Part of RTEs obligation for receiving the licence fee is to provide a range of programmes that are distinctive, diverse and appealing to either all or to different people. Do you think that it provides this service?

B I don't know whether they are naturally going for the older age group definitely so, but I think a lot of younger people are switched off so maybe they should bring more of that stuff but then they probably feel 2FM is providing that. That's the idea isn't it, you know. And I know sometimes I notice they've introduced Irish programmes, completely in Irish at a bad time when I think most people switch off. Now I listen cause I'm fairly good at Irish but even the content of them to me are boring, not interesting, you know and then they have Radio na Gaeltachta for that anyway, you know, but I think there is an obligation to produce so many programmes in the Irish language, even in RTE 1.

P 2FM.

B No, do they produce anything in Irish in 2FM.

P 2FM it has, this is how I heard Willie O'Reilly slagging them one time at a forum. He was saying 2FM (inaudible). A minute of the Irish news whereas he said he has to have a certain amount of things on, one of his, for instance, that RTE for example can change any of their personnel whenever suits them whereas if he was to hire a new presenter or manager he has to go the BCI

and get approval but anyway I'm not sure if you're aware but there's a quasi national radio station coming up for offering, what I mean by quasi national is for example, Today FM is 100.3 to 100.6 all around the country in that frequency whereas the one that's available you could be down say the West and it might be 89 point something but up here it might be whatever, it's still the national station and that's coming up for offering and they're saying that News Talk might go for it, they're saying that UTV might go for it who own some stations and they're also saying that Helen Shaw who is ex-RTE is getting a consortium together to go for it. So what do you think in terms of like another national station was added to the mix? What do you think of that?

B I would have no problem with it. No. It's good. Competition. It's good.

P Now that's about all I have to ask you B_____. That's it.

B. Thank you.

Appendix E: Interview with 'Claire'

<i>Interview with Claire (Secretary) real name 'B'</i>
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P. Can I ask you B_____, can you remember your first or earliest of memory of listening to the radio.

B. I probably do yes as a child listening, my father was much older than my mother, he was an older man actually, he was in his late 60s and well we used to listen to the BBC actually. We were never allowed listen to RTE in those days so we used to listen to what was, I don't know what they called it, it's now BBC 4 but I don't know what it was previously called.

P The Home Service.

B Or the BBC, it might have been the Home Service, yeah and questions and answers I remember or Any Questions is what it was called. I think it may still be on but you weren't allowed speak when that was on so I remember that indeed and the news. Well RTE, Radio Éireann as it was called and in fact it was so old my father used to call it 2RM which was the nineteen, because my father was seventy when he go married so he used to call it 2RM but it was Radio Éireann as they called it then.

P 2RN was the first name for it.

B That's right so he sometimes would call it 2RN so that's how far back I'm going as a child and we'd listen to the news and we couldn't and I also when I went to kindergarden school I remember listening to on the BBC as you're calling it the Home Service, a Call Listen with Mother, so that's going back

when I was a child of four years, three years of age and there was a programme for children.

P So in terms of when you were younger, in terms of the shows or music, what shows or what music did you listen to on the radio?

B Well I suppose when I was a teenage it was Luxembourg, Radio Luxembourg we'd listen to. We weren't allowed listen to it at home but we'd tune in and get Radio Luxembourg so that's probably in terms of music really.

P And what kind of songs were playing on it?

B Well you see I was sort of into The Beatles and that sort of thing, Elvis Presley, 60s sort of music, that sort of stuff, rock-in-roll really in those days.

P So I was going to ask you to discuss what you listen to, you were saying it was Radio Luxembourg.

B Well Radio Luxembourg when I was sort of, I'd try to switch it over to Radio Luxembourg, tune in the old radio, big radio that we had and then we had little transistor radios but yeah it would have been Radio Luxembourg, yeah I suppose yeah. But as a child then I remember they'd have a thing called (inaudible) record it was an old classical music my parents would listen to on the radio and I suppose my ear tuned into that then and I always had an interest in classical music and I still do and I think it was tuned in as a child, you know.

P You pre-empted my next question which I was going to say, does what you used to listen to when you were younger have any influence or bearing on what you're listening to now.

- B It did yeah not the rock-in-roll stuff because that was suppose when I was in my 20s and teenage years but it does because my ear was tuned in from a young age and my mother in particular had a love of classical music. I picked up on that yeah.
- P Now in terms of like music that you regard as oldies okay, whether it's Frank Sinatra.
- B No I never listened to Frank Sinatra. My mother hated crooners, she thought they were wrong, bad. I like them now but she though crooners were bad and they were dreadful and they destroyed music.
- P Did she.
- B I actually like them now.
- P Did she listen to like the Great Opera and stuff.
- B The Great Opera stuff and the good, the John McCormacks and that sort of stuff, and the good singers.
- P Crooners would be like sort of to her Roby Williams. In terms of the DJs and not radio presenters, the actual DJs do you think the DJs are different on the radio now than they were back then.
- B Oh totally different. I'm not great that great now with this sort of thing but however I would think they are, they have a different style. Totally informal.
- P What would you say now, in terms of your perception of what you think?

- B Yeah I haven't given that much thought. I find that particular, maybe we can come back on that one.
- P In terms of say RTE presenters would you think that in terms of style or personality or whatever that they are different now than they were.
- B Oh there totally different from what they were.
- P What would you think that would be?
- B What's the major difference? They were so much formal long ago, they were very careful with the way they presented stuff and you know it's become much more relaxed now. Life has become much more relaxed I suppose, I suppose the whole world has become relaxed, Ireland in particular and they had to be careful about what they said and they were very formal and structured and they were very like the BBC, there was a BBC accent as you know and that's all gone now you know.
- P Presenters years ago used to have even dress suits.
- B That's right and they were very formal and I can't think of the names of the people long ago but they were very formal in the way they spoke, and they spoke in a particular way and one woman died quite recent, about a year ago and she had a beautiful speaking voice. They were probably very clear I think.
- P In RTE.
- B In RTE yeah.
- P She was head of presentation.

- B That's right yeah.
- P I'm not sure if you're obviously not into pop music or whatever, if (inaudible) would you say even the 2FM or any of the music stations how do you imagine the DJs pick the music for their show. How do you imagine they pick their CDs?
- B How do I imagine they do now?
- P Yeah, yeah.
- B Ah sure that's all done by research I'm sure. I'm sure they've got researchers there telling them, I'm sure they're not just doing it out of their own head are they? I would imagine no?, naturally they will have their own preferences I'm sure. I don't think they're playing all what they particularly like. They can't do that because you've got, I would imagine it's researchers know what's popular or whatever, you know or feedback that they're getting I'm sure as well from what they're playing otherwise nobody is going to listen to them.
- P Okay, well this is probably more about music stations but most of the music stations now play what they call back-to-back music without interruption.
- B They do, they do yeah.
- P Whereas RTE would still play and the BBC radio 2 would still play songs and the presenter would come in after them and talk.
- B That's right.

- P And talk and whatever and some of them say Dublin music stations play so many in a row. What do you think of that kind of.....
- B I don't like the back-to-back stuff. I prefer somebody coming in, and that's just my old fashioned way maybe.
- P Say something.
- B I do yeah and to give some background to it or say something even. I know but that's not what young people like because they're playing this back-to-back stuff but that's my preference.
- P Okay. Now if I was to speak about the here and now right, what primarily do you use the radio for now? What would you turn on the radio for now?
- B Well I just turn the radio on first thing in the morning when I wake up at 6.45 a.m. and I listen to Morning Ireland all the time even driving in the car, I get in here a little bit before 9 a.m. so I don't hear the other programmes after that but I just listen. I listen to Morning Ireland for what's current affairs, what's going on, what's happened, and the news and the weather and I'm a weather fanatic, I know the weather forecast all over the world so I'm very interested in the weather and then the next time I've got to hear the radio is when I'm driving home and I don't leave here till 7 p.m. most evenings so I don't even hear Five Seven Live, I might hear the end of it and then I go into whatever is on and I listen to it, I'll have it on, even if it's in Irish I'll listen to it.
- P And it's Radio 1 all the time?
- B It's all Radio 1 except if it's something really boring or it's some play that I don't like, I listen to plays and all the rest and they used to have plays on a Tuesday in the winter, I switch over to Lyric. I like Lyric and I love Lyric but

I never think to switch it over unless whatever is on RTE is not of interest to me but most things are. I don't particularly listen to sport.

P I haven't this down as a question but so what would you even sample any of the other stations in Dublin?

B No.

P Would you ever be tempted to?

B No.

P You're getting whatever you want off RTE 1.

B I get what I want from RTE, yeah and they're all tuned on my radio on the car and I spend a fair bit of time in the car travelling but I'll only have RTE 1 or Lyric, don't even listen to 2FM.

P Okay. Now if the radio is gone tomorrow what would you miss most on it, in terms if it was gone, is it the news?

B I'd miss the news and the current affair programmes, I would yeah. My television is hardly ever turned on. It's the radio.

P It sounds like my kind of house that I want.

B What?

P That sounds like the kind of house that I'd like to live in.

B Yeah, yeah.

- P My other half watches the television.
- B Well an awful lot of people do. I never, never look at soaps, not interested, it's unusual. I've never looked at a soap in my life, I mean they maybe on in the house but I never look at them. So I'm not interested in soap, I like as I said.
- P So to you now, what makes good radio, in other words if you're listening to radio and you were listening to something in the car and you wouldn't get out until it was over, what would that be to you?
- B Well probably an interview with somebody who was very interesting, you know, sometimes you come across these things, you know. I listen to Play Back all the time and most of the stuff that's on Play Back, they've pick out the stuff, I've heard most of it, you know, what do you call her who does Play Back, Ruth Bucannon and I listen to that most of the time I listen to Ruth Bucaonnon and she picks out the interesting bits, what they think is interesting obviously and interviews with I suppose with new, interviews with interesting people probably you know.
- P Okay if I was to say to you well this is probably regarding RTE, who are the best presenters and why do you think?
- B I think Cathal Mac Coille is good in the morning, I think he's good in Morning Ireland. I think he's a good interesting, intelligent interviewer. I like Vincent Browne, he's very controversial, you know, his private life is his own business but he gets people going. I think he gets a lot out of people. I never miss Vincent Browne in the Winter, I like him at 10 p.m. I like, I think Paddy O'Gorman is great, he's very good with people, he draws them out and he's a nice manner. I like Pat Kenny on radio, cause he's intelligent but I think he's

dreadful on the television. I think he's very good, he's a very intelligent guy and he's doing what he's best at on the radio I think but I never get to hear him by the way cause I'm working but the odd time I would. I think he's far better on radio than he is on television.

P Now obviously within RTE in last while, Marion Finnuccane is now gone to weekends and a fella by the name of Ryan Tuberty has taken over.....

B No dreadful and most people I know turn him off and I turn off.

P You don't like him.

B No. He's all over the place and he's going to continue I think isn't he.

P Yeah he's certainly going to be on from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. anyway.

B And he's got a longer..... I hear him for a few minutes in the morning sometimes. I really turn the radio off with him but most people feel that. I don't know why they put him on because he doesn't listen to people, he's all over the place, you know, and he gets it all wrong and he's coming out with his own ideas, all the time it's his views and he's jumping from one thing to the other. Now I think Marion had come to the end of her days, I thought she was great in her day and was very good for women. You know, she was one of the first women presenters and I think she's very good and I wouldn't certainly think that Ryan Tuberty is good. I think Philip Bolger-Hayes is good. I like his style, that's me now.

P So this is probably irrelevant, you know, I was going to ask to you what attraction does RTE radio hold over for you than the other non RTE stations?

B You see I don't even listen to them you know so I suppose I can't say.

- P Would you say RTE is more professional?
- B I would think it's more professional than the other stations but the other stations are for younger people really I think by and large, the other Irish stations yeah.
- P Then somebody said to me on an interview on Friday that they trust what RTE come out with in terms of the news.
- B No I don't particular trust them but they're usually right yeah, right enough and I remember as a young girl at school I remember somebody said and she shouldn't have said it, she didn't read the paper she listened to the news on the radio because she thought it was more accurate than what you'd get, which is more than the media are coming out with stuff, it is more accurate what RTE put out is probably more accurate at the end of the day. It's gossip a lot in some of the papers you know.
- P Now RTE is funded by the licence fee, this is radio now and on air commercials, other stations are financed solely through the on air advertisements, these are the stations in Dublin now, what do you think of this system of financing, do you think it's fair that RTE would be getting the licence fee and advertisements and the other non RTE kind of....
- B I suppose it's like anything else, it's our national station and I suppose like Aer Lingus or like anything else, I suppose I don't think too much about it really but what do you do. I suppose I'm biased towards RTE so that's difficult for me to answer.
- P Okay in terms of, you're probably aware that the weather forecast is sponsored and I business too I think....

- B Now yeah.
- P What do you think of sponsorship on programmes on RTE? Now I know years ago you had Dear Frankie.....
- B Oh I know all that sort of stuff.
- P All that stuff and slot shows and then you have shows that are kind of.....
- B That are sponsored as you say.
- P Do you think, I mean does it affect what you hear or.....
- B No it doesn't affect what I hear. It's a bit annoying the way they pump this thing out before it, you know, on the radio in particular where they pump out this advertisement all the time but it doesn't really bother me, you know, it doesn't affect what I'm going to hear after it no. I think they're very professional in what they.....
- P So you have all the other stations, you have Today FM and then the Dublin stations and whatever, I think as RTE is getting the licence fee, do you think that RTE radio should produce their programme differently in comparison to what other stations have on the air? Should they have on different programmes than other stations or.....
- B You mean.....
- P You know like the other stations are whatever say for example are playing music whatever, should 2FM be playing music as well or whatever or do you

think RTE should just do whatever it has to do and then the other stations have to find their way around that or.....

B Yeah I think so (laugh).

P If I was to say to you now, you probably don't listen to the stations in Dublin, but what station would you say provides Radio 1 with the most competition in Dublin?

B I suppose, I forget even the name of it, you know the other one?

P News Talk.

B Yes that would, I would think that provides especially at the busy slots like, the evening slot, isn't that right, a lot of people listen, I don't but a lot of people do, I know they switch over to that in the evening and that probably does provide RTE with competition.

P Okay.

B It's still away ahead I think isn't, RTE with listenership.

P Yeah, I was going to ask you what stations are the most popular in Dublin, what would you say is the most popular station in Dublin?

B Overall I believe RTE Radio 1 and 2FM are and but then it's all to do with age. I'm in the older age group, so my age group, a bit younger and older than me that would probably, it's because of the age that you listen to RTE 1 maybe younger people don't, some people do, I know, some people don't, you know.

- P Say you were again this is not on this, say what do you think it is that attracts people to RTE, is it a certain age, have a mortgage, have kids or something sort of go to RTE Radio 1, are they fed up with the music.
- B It is. I suppose older people like me don't want to hear wall-to-wall music and probably by and large more interested in current affairs and you know, it's just the age, really an age thing.
- P If I was to mention the phrase public service broadcasting, what does this mean to you now?
- B That means RTE to me you know, that's what I see as public service because yeah that's what I see it as RTE, either the radio or the television.
- P Okay if I was say to you what is the difference if any is between 2FM and Today FM?
- B I suppose that's a hard one me again because I don't listen to Today FM that much but I would imagine there is a difference you know.
- P Okay. Do you ever listen to Today FM and what's your opinion on Today FM. Dunphy was on it.
- B Was on it. I listened to it a few time and a lot of my friends said 'Lord he's great' but I don't like him I suppose really, you know.
- P And then you're opinion of Dublin stations, you don't listen to them.
- B See I don't, I'm bad for that.

- P No that's just me here. Now you mentioned in the past but do you ever listen to any BBC stations.
- B Well at the moment, I used to when my mother was alive because she loved BBC 4 and had it permanently fixed into her day.
- P And why don't you listen to it now?
- B Because actually to be honest with you I don't listen to it because it's hard to tune in on my car, I find it difficult to get the signal, I can get it sometimes but I would like it. I would love it, even my gardening programmes, I like all these various programmes and they would be better than RTE you know.
- P Yeah but it's available (inaudible) on the car or if you're living in Dublin and you have cable you can get BBC 4 through the cable, crystal clear.
- B Oh right yeah.
- P It's part of their digital service. Do you think that the other non RTE stations should be allocated funding from the licence fee if they put on the types of programmes that RTE do.
- B Probably yeah, why not if they would put on the same sort of programme, yeah why not, why should they be left out, you know.
- P What do you think radio would sound like in ten years time? Do you see any trends sort of happening?
- B Well RTE is slightly moving, like with getting this Ryan Tuberty in and they're trying to change but I suppose some of the other programmes will never change, some of those evening programmes I listen to. I was just

saying to one of the girls out there about John Kelly who's on RTE. I don't like him I'm not that keen on him but I know a lot of people even in there 30s and 40s think he's very good. He's okay. I still have him on but he drives me mad really but he's very popular I know that and I think, wasn't he head hunted, didn't they get him into RTE.

P Is there any types of programmes that you'd like to hear more on RTE Radio 1. Any types of programmes that you sort say 'give me more of that' or are missing programmes.

B Can't think off the top of my head. Well I think more of these interesting interviews I suppose, current affairs type stuff really I like. I like, I thought that guy was very good they had on a Sunday, the guy from Saint Pats, What If, what do you call him?

P Oh yeah they were doing a.....

B Forrester is it, it's not Forrester.

P What If in terms of history?

B Or if Bertie Ahearn hadn't done up, Charlie Haughey hadn't been done. I thought he was brilliant, loved him.

P It was a BBC idea.

B Was it.

P They were doing that What If on Radio 4 for the last couple of years. What If the Second World War hadn't happened?

- B Yeah what would have happened? I thought he was brilliant. He's on secondment I think from Saint Pats to, oh yeah.
- P Okay, now RTE Radio 1 puts on a summer schedule whereby some prominent presenters go on holidays for several weeks and this also includes 2FM where Gerry Ryan goes on holidays for several weeks, what do you think of this, what do you think is the reason for it?
- B I wish they didn't do that but they do but I notice that Morning Ireland doesn't. At one stage years ago Morning Ireland used to stop.
- P It starts at 7.30 a.m. now.
- B Now it starts at 7.30 a.m. and well it used to start, it's a sign of the times it used to start at 8.00 a.m. years ago but I think it actually stopped altogether years ago, you mightn't remember it, but there was no morning Ireland for the summer which I think I'm glad they do have it.
- P That's very interesting. You're probably from Dublin but in terms of stations outside Dublin.
- B See I don't listen to Kildare FM or whatever they call it.
- P Do you think the stations down the country sound different to the Dublin stations?
- B Well when I've heard them, they're just ghastly I think, very local, reading out the funerals and I heard them sometimes, you know, if you're travelling these things come in on you, absolutely dreadful but that's what the audience

obviously wants you know. Kildare, Carlow and all these Clare FMs and all these and they're very unprofessional I think.

P They are kind of aimed at the local.

B Well for the uneducated people, this is a terribly snobbish to say, well I think you know.

P Part of RTEs obligation for receiving the licence fee is to provide a range of programmes that are distinctive, diverse and appealing to either all or to different people. Do you think that it provides this service?

B I don't know whether they are naturally going for the older age group definitely so, but I think a lot of younger people are switched off so maybe they should bring more of that stuff but then they probably feel 2FM is providing that. That's the idea isn't it, you know. And I know sometimes I notice they've introduced Irish programmes, completely in Irish at a bad time when I think most people switch off. Now I listen cause I'm fairly good at Irish but even the content of them to me are boring, not interesting, you know and then they have Radio na Gaeltachta for that anyway, you know, but I think there is an obligation to produce so many programmes in the Irish language, even in RTE 1.

P 2FM.

B No, do they produce anything in Irish in 2FM.

P 2FM it has, this is how I heard Willie O'Reilly slagging them one time at a forum. He was saying 2FM (inaudible). A minute of the Irish news whereas he said he has to have a certain amount of things on, one of his, for instance, that RTE for example can change any of their personnel whenever suits them whereas if he was to hire a new presenter or manager he has to go the BCI

and get approval but anyway I'm not sure if you're aware but there's a quasi national radio station coming up for offering, what I mean by quasi national is for example, Today FM is 100.3 to 100.6 all around the country in that frequency whereas the one that's available you could be down say the West and it might be 89 point something but up here it might be whatever, it's still the national station and that's coming up for offering and they're saying that News Talk might go for it, they're saying that UTV might go for it who own some stations and they're also saying that Helen Shaw who is ex-RTE is getting a consortium together to go for it. So what do you think in terms of like another national station was added to the mix? What do you think of that?

B I would have no problem with it. No. It's good. Competition. It's good.

P Now that's about all I have to ask you B_____. That's it.

B. Thank you

Appendix F: Interview with 'Fergal'

<i>Interview with Fergal (Lab technician) real name 'S'</i>

P I have a list of questions here and feel free to answer whatever way you want to.

S Okay.

P What year were you born in did you say?

S '58, 1958.

P Now can you remember your earliest memory of radio.

S Radio yeah actually it's actually funny even last Sunday it was a nice sunny day. I was out in the back garden and the sports was on, GAA like, you know, you could hear it coming through the house, that's my earliest memory listening to the GAA maybe or sports on the radio on a Sunday afternoon.

P And what age would you be about.

S Oh probably young, nine/ten you know.

P And in terms as well what was on in the home, what station was on the home? Can you remember anything of that time.

S We used to listen to the BBC. My mother was English so we used to listen to BBC a lot as well as RTE. That's all there was around at that particular time. BBC radio or RTE were the only two stations that we'd listen to.

- P And then you moved on and you became a teenager then, what stations or.....
- S Well usually just RTE 2 or something like that. There wasn't very many local radio stations around.
- P What about Radio Luxembourg or whatever?
- S No, no I didn't to listen to it much. It was on, like it could be on alright you know.
- P So 2FM then.
- S RTE and 2FM.
- P What about the pirates or Dublin stations?
- S Yeah Radio Dublin I suppose was a big thing at that stage alright like but that was the only option alright really like you know.
- P In terms of some of the favourite songs that you used to hear played on the radio, if I was just to spring that question at you, what song or artists or songs would spring to mind?
- S I wasn't really much into the music radio. I was into listening to radio like you know so there is nothing really that would jump out, I don't think that quickly, like you know. I mean if I wanted music I'd put on a record or something like that, you know, to listen to radio, in younger days for music, nothing jumped out, there's nothing a favourite you know.

- P If I was to say to you like what would you regard as oldies, if I was to say name the songs that you think are oldies.
- S Ok we'd go back to people like the Beatles, and things like that and maybe Frank Sinatra and that type of thing.
- P Do you ever hear of songs that remind you of a particular day, you know, God I remember when that came out, I remember way back when.
- S Yeah if you hear the songs that you haven't heard, it might be disco or something like that you know.
- P And what about if I was to mention to like a classic summer song, what would a summer song be to you.
- S Under the Board Walk, that one there. That would be a classic summer song alright like.
- P What do you think of the music that's played on RTE Radio 1?
- S Well I like RTE Radio 1, that would be my station of choice actually. I'd like it most of the time actually but depending you'd choose your programmes alright like you know but I do like the easy listening music like things Ronan Collins in the afternoon and that type of thing, you know.
- P Do you think that the DJs and presenters on RTE radio have changed over the years, their style or whatever?
- S Not RTE, no. Every now and again just maybe Ryan Tuberty coming lately to RTE now but not over the years.

- P What do you think of him?
- S I like Ryan Tuberty. He talks a bit too fast now for radio I think. Like sometimes he can be hard to understand but most of the DJs that are on RTE now have been around quite a long time now.
- P How do you imagine that the radio presenters go about picking or choosing the music?
- S I would say it's probably picked for them, I'd say. A producer would probably pick them alright.
- P And what would they base them on?
- S Oh they'd pick it on probably the listenership or age range probably listening at time.
- P Speaking about the here and now what do you primarily put on the radio for now or in other words if radio was gone tomorrow as an entity what would you miss most about it?
- S I would miss the news and current affairs.
- P What makes good radio for you? In other words if you were driving home in the car and you wanted to listen to the end of something, God this is great, what would be on the radio?
- S I find maybe a mixture between music and news, that type of mixture I like. They used to do, I'm trying to think of the programme it used to be. Even Pat Kenny sometimes that would be a mixture between music and news alright like.

- P Who are the best presenters do you think, you know, on radio?
- S My favourite presenters alright, music wise I'd like Ronan Collins now and Maxi sometimes, I'd pop that on if I'm up that early (laugh).
- P Do you have a car, do you drive a car?
- S Yeah.
- P Do you have presets, and what they set to?
- S RTE 1, Q102, they'd be the only two. They'd be six preset but they'd be the two I'd use.
- P So what attraction does RTE radio hold over for you than a non RTE radio station?
- S Well it tends to be a bit more professional and the style I suppose as well like, you know, it's more professional.
- P In terms of RTE, RTE radio is funded by the license fee and on air commercials but the others are just relying on commercials. Do you think that that's a fair system of financing?
- S I think so yeah. I think the local radio should maybe get a bit more of the licence funds but I mean certain that RTE gets alright like you know. Maybe it should be split more among local radio stations as well. I mean once they fulfil their parameters like you know. Each radio station has a certain amount of news produced but if they come across as filling those parameters like they should get a share of the license fee you know.

- P In Dublin what stations do you think provides the most competition to RTE Radio 1?
- S RTE Radio 1, I suppose maybe FM104.
- P And then if I was to say to you what do you think is the most popular radio station in Dublin?
- S I think 2FM probably is but I'm not certain.
- P Now what do you think makes RTE radio different from the other Dublin stations?
- S Well I don't really listen to RTE because it's a Dublin station. I wouldn't listen to a particular station because of its locality where it is you know what I mean.
- P Sets it apart.
- S Ah well it would certainly be professionalism you know. It's output, the variety like whereas most of the local stations its just music all the way. You get variety on RTE 1.
- P If I was to mention the phrase to you public service broadcasting, what would that mean to you?
- S That they have a specific remit like you know. That they have to provide a certain amount of different types of programmes be it news, current affairs, that type of thing.

- P Now what's the difference if any between would you say 2FM and Today FM?
- S Today FM and 2FM... I wouldn't see too much of a difference except that maybe 2FM would get more money because it's an RTE station whereas the other stations are kind of self-supporting.
- P Okay and in terms of public service broadcasting what would your opinion be about 2FM in terms of public service broadcasting?
- S I'd say they wouldn't have the variety that RTE 1 has. It probably goes for a younger audience alright like and is more geared to maybe the younger person, it doesn't have the variety certainly that RTE 1 would have alright.
- P Do you ever listen to Today FM?
- S No.
- P What's your opinion of Dublin stations?
- S I enjoy them for a short time but I wouldn't have them on twenty-four/seven. I'd maybe put them on for fifteen/twenty minutes in the evening. I mean certainly Q102 now would be more relaxing to listen to in the evening like for twenty minutes if you want to wind down.
- P And do you ever listen to any of the BBC stations?
- S Occasionally now I'd listen to the Royal Service and maybe BBC Radio 2 now and again.

- P Do you think that the other non RTE stations should be allocated funding from the license fee if they put on the types of programmes that RTE are putting on?
- S Yeah if they do the public service end of things alright like they should.
- P How do you find out about programmes that are on RTE radio?
- S I just tune in. I tend to know the general run down of RTE, like what's on at a certain time. I don't specifically look up to see what's on, like you know, cause it's easy enough if you don't like what's on you just switch off, tune off.
- P If I was to say to you in ten years time what do you think radio would sound like in ten years time?
- S Certainly they'd be a lot more choice, whether that's a good thing or not. I think you tend to go with what your happy with like even if a new station comes on you might listen an odd time, now and then but you generally fall back to what your used to and what you like or got familiar with over the years.
- P Do you ever listen to radio over the internet or TV?
- S The internet now I'd listen to, yeah, yeah. That's usually where I pick up BBC Radio 2.
- P And do you find that you're listening to more or less radio than before?
- S More I'd say.

- P Do you ever listen to music on anything like an iPod or MP3 player or cassette player?
- S Yeah I'd listen to CDs or MP3 now I've just recently got one so I'm just getting used to it.
- P In terms of choice is there any type of radio station missing from the airwaves?
- S Oh no I think specific radio stations, I mean if you wanted a country one I'm sure there's a country radio like you know and if you want talk radio there's plenty talk radio. So I think it's more or less covered.
- P RTE radio puts on a summer schedule whereby most of the prominent presenters go on holidays and that includes Gerry Ryan on 2FM. What do you think about that? What do you think the reason is for the that?
- S Well I don't agree with it in that I take my holidays to listen to the radio and they're all gone and you're missing a lot. I suppose they're entitled to their holidays as well like you know but they seem to go for a long time. They take six to eight weeks. Where else would that happen?
- P Senior RTE staff go off for the three months.
- S It's an inconvenience in that if you're off a day off during the summer, like you know, you like to sit down and listen to the radio and to listen to Pat Kenny and Marion Finnuane but they're gone like you know.
- P What would you say you dislike most about radio in general?
- S Well I suppose the commercial stations now the advertisement breaks.

- P Too long.
- S Too long.
- P A bit intrusive on the audience.
- S Very much so, intrusive like you know yeah. Even RTE now and again it gets a bit annoying alright like you know.
- P If you think like if it was like BBC with no commercials would it be better altogether RTE?
- S Oh yeah if there was no commercials at least you can keep the stream going. I think it's awful like you know especially Pat Kenny maybe they're interviewing somebody from another country and he'll have to stop to go for a commercial break and it just cuts off the whole train of thought there.
- P What station would you consider the most entertaining?
- S BBC 2, BBC Radio 2. I actually like Terry Wogan so I listen in the morning for an hour or so. I find him quite entertaining.
- P What station would you say is the most informative?
- S Well RTE I would have to say when you tune in. You can get anything you like you know regular updates.
- P And what station do you consider is the most professional?
- S RTE Radio 1 I would consider very professional.

- P What types of programmes would you like to hear more on RTE?
- S A bit more comedy now. They don't tend to have a lot. I think Ben and Balfe is the only thing really that's available on Saturdays like you know. Other than that there doesn't tend to be.
- P I don't know if you ever hear the country stations when you travel down the country and how do they compare to the Dublin stations.
- S Usually if I'm travelling I wouldn't listen to local stations or I mean I wouldn't be there very long so I just usually leave the.....
- P They're just a bit more local than the Dublin stations. So if I was to ask you how you would state your feelings or appreciation of RTE radio in general what would you say.
- S Well generally now I like the output. Like it is very informative. You can tune in regularly and get your news and your sport and any updates that you need and yeah the sports coverage is very good as well, like you know.
- P Part of RTE's obligation for receiving the license fee is to provide a range of programmes that are distinctive and diverse and appealing to minorities and to everybody, do you think it provides this service?
- S Well yeah I've heard certainly different types of programmes alright like you know. They used to do a programme on people with disabilities for people with disabilities alright like you know. Certainly there is a variety there alright like you know but it wouldn't be necessarily something I'd tune into every time alright like you know but I know there is a variety there.

- P Now there's a prospect of another national station being advertised offering a service in terms it won't be RTE. What do you think of the prospects like what would you like to see in that?
- S I think things like Century Radio and things like that proved that there's not necessarily the demand there. I mean people would like to see another one but when it does come along it's not really supported and people tend to fall back to maybe RTE or the station they were used to. So I don't think the demand is there.
- P Now in terms of digital radio, it's not something that RTE or Ireland has embraced yet which has led to extra services in radio. If digital was to come here what would you think if RTE were to have additional services. What would you like to see happen or how would you like to see it happen?
- S Well we've been changing because of sport like you know so I would think they might have a special sport service, that they would have a radio station specifically for sport. I mean there's so much sport going on at the moment I'd say the capacity is there for them to run a separate station.
- P Well that's grand. Thanks very much.

Appendix E: Interview with 'John'

<i>Interview with John (Engineer) real name 'B'</i>

P What year were you born in?

B 1952.

P 1952. You're ten years older than me.

B 19th January 1952. The beginning of '52.

P Can you I ask you your first or earliest memory of radio. Do you remember your first.

B My earliest memory of radio I would say it goes back to the Den Joe period. I suppose one of the things that stays in my mind all the time is listening to the GAA matches and Michael O'Hare's voice on a Sunday afternoon and Den Joe.

P Den Joe was dancing on the radio.

B That was the kind of stuff that I would remember I suppose and of course things.....

P What time was Den Joe on?

B Oh that would be on about 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. and 'around the house and mind the dresser', that's what I can remember up to a point. Anyway it would be that. I know my mother everyday would be listening to the Kennedy's of

Castleross. So I'd hear them. I'd have no choice. I'd be sitting down having lunch or whatever and Kennedys would be in the background and then on you'd have Dear Frankie. Frankie Byrne indeed. Dear Frankie.

P The sponsor shows.

B Absolutely. The sponsor shows were on around lunchtime. They would have been from my early days.

P And then your parents would have had Radio Éireann as it was called.

B Exactly.

P So then when you were a teenager, what did you listen to when you were a teenager?

B Top of the Pops.

P On the radio.

B Yes.

P Which station?

B Don't ask me.

P BBC.

B BBC yes. Well it wouldn't be called Top of the Pops but it would be similar to Top of the Pops. They'd do the charts. I'd listen to that I suppose because I'm from a family where a lot of brothers would be older than I. They'd have

it on so I'd be listening to what they'd be listening to and I wouldn't have much choice.

P It's amazing the amount of people I'm talking that if you have older brothers or whatever the influence their music has on you.

B The fact of the matter is the older brother would have on and you dare not change the station and that was it. Basically there was a lot of us in the family, there was always a brother older than I listening to the radio (laugh). I remember it being on and I remember Radio Luxembourg was a big hit in the house so I'd be listening to Radio Luxembourg. Not by choice but I knew no different because my brother who was older than I, brothers who were older than I (laugh) would decide what I'm listening to. I would go along with what was on.

P If I said to you now name some of your favourite songs that you used to hear in the radio back what kind of songs come to mind. Just spring off your head.

B The one from Chris Andrews.

P To Whom it Concerns.

B Exactly, exactly, very good. He was Yesterday's Man.

P Yesterday's Man.

B That springs up immediately and of course what's his name, Elvis and Cliff. Elvis and Cliff would have been all the rage when I was younger you know.

P So they spring back.....

B Immediately. I remember Chris Andrews I'd always thought he'd a great voice.

P I had a sheet with his name on it but he would have been the 60s somewhere.

B Oh there's no doubt. He would be I would say probably early 60s. I would say about 62/63.

P And you see this is the thing that works out too is that you would have been not that old, you remember that so either the stations were playing the records after the life span of a couple of years or else you know just whatever was on and you remember it, you know what I mean.

B Oh yeah oh I would you would find say Cliffs, what's that song, I'm a Batchelor Boy.

P Batchelor Boy is '62.

B Or even before that I'd say. I would imagine Bachelor Boy could be late '50s or early '60s and that kind of stuff, that would be my memory of the music. The reason I like Chris Andrews I thought he'd a great voice and he was so much different to the rest of them.

P He has, he's very distinctive and they use some of that obviously the music, To Whom it Concerns, they use some of that section for the Late, Late Show.

B Absolutely.

P Do you think what you listened to in the past as a teenager before or a little after had any bearing on what you listen to today in terms of music or radio?

- B I think not. I think now I've changed completely with my habit of listening to radio. No I don't think it does. If I happen to be switching the radio and I heard a snippet of Yesterday's Man, or what.....
- P To Whom it Concerns.
- P To Whom it Concerns, I would stop to listen to that one because that one rings very well. That would ring an awful lot better now than Batchelor Boy or even any of Elvis's. I don't know now but I always liked that tune. Its been an awful long time since I've heard it. With regard to influencing me today none of it does now, I think that I've got my own, I'm at an age now where I'd listen to Radio Éireann . I like to see little snippets of life indispersed with the music.
- P I'm going to come onto that. In terms of music what's described as say oldies okay, so to the oldies to you is what. If I was to say to you what kind of oldies, if you were to pick out for a radio show or a CD or make a list of your oldies, say there was a slot in the radio called oldies and you were to send in a list of oldies to be played say on Ronan Collins. What kind of songs, would you be saying those kind of songs?
- B Yes they would be and if you're talking about old programmes you're talking about as you say the Jacob's programme and the Frankie programme, those kind of things. I mean they were great programmes.
- P (Inaudible) and stuff.
- B Exactly those are the crowd. I don't remember all of them but that was my lunch everyday listening to those.

- P I remember them actually being taken off because I recorded some of the last ones and it's a pity because they're only fifteen minutes. There more entertaining than some of the stuff you'd hear.....
- B Ah sure Frankie Byrne was absolutely fantastic crack. It was great to listen to.
- P If somebody did that in a modern day version it would be great. So I was going to ask you, some of the people I've interviewed okay are younger than me or might be thirty or forty but then they're referring to things like going back like some of the songs we're talking about and you say where do you get the reference point from them. Well my father used to like them or whatever but the stuff you're referring to is.....
- B My own.
- P You're not going back any further than your own stuff.
- B No I'm not and it's from then on. There's no doubt.
- P This is a stupid question but do you feel out of touch with what's going in the music today.
- B Absolutely.
- P Not that that's important.
- B It pains me right now. I find the music today does not appeal to me at all.
- P One thing you did mention when you were talking about Chris Andrews and the 60s songs, you haven't mentioned crooners like Frank Sinatra or whatever in terms of liking him or.....

- B No I didn't like him. He wouldn't be my cup of tea. I would prefer him today than then. I wouldn't think he was worth listening then.
- P Then but even now though.
- B But now I would listen to Frank Sinatra.
- P Somebody mentioned those Andy Williams or Frank Sinatra or some of those songs.
- B Well Andy Williams I wouldn't labour too much listening to him today but I would listen to Frank Sinatra today. Frank Sinatra is good. Frank Sinatra is miles better than Andy Williams in my opinion. Andy Williams, even then, didn't appeal but you would listen because I said already you don't have choice, you listen to what radio programme was on and that was on. But Andy Williams I wouldn't waste my time listening to him today. Sinatra is good.
- P Now if I mentioned like say a classic summer song that you associate with the summer.
- B Summertime.
- P Which one is that?
- B (Sings).
- P Ella Fitzgerald. So many people did that song so that's the one.
- B That's the one yeah.

- P And if I was to say to you what do you think of the music played on RTE Radio 1. Now the music that they play, obviously they have Maxi in the morning and John Creedon.
- B Absolutely fantastic. Those are my programmes. That's the only radio I listen to.
- P So the selection of music they play.
- B I think it's fantastic and what I do find is good in it, they've got snippets of live indispersed, they've different conversations about something going on or whatever, but little bits of general knowledge things in there. I think that's lovely. I don't want a situation where I listen music, put the record on, record on. I love to have the breaks in it.
- P A little conversation.
- B Like Carrie Crowley those kind of situations. There Sundays now isn't that right. That would be my Sunday morning listening.
- P Conversation.....
- B And Rising Time, isn't it Rising Time they call it in the morning, every morning that's every morning that's the station that goes on.
- P Do you think that the radio DJs in terms of the ones that play the music are different than they were years ago?
- B Yes.

- P What do you think is the difference?
- B Well okay the DJs years ago were hopping on from song to song. Now at least there is a stop of a chat or little snippets of life might appear in here and there and that's much, much more preferable I would have thought than just announcing the songs. You know years ago you had the Terry Wogans or whatever they just turned over the records that was all, and maybe a comment then, but very little comments you know. That to me, having snippets of life interspersed you know.
- P I remember even Mike Murphy, he used to do Morning Call on the RTE. Prior to Rise and Time. He used to do that and then they had Morning Ireland on. Okay what's your take on women presenters?
- B My take on women presenters I find them very good. There is no doubt, Maxi every morning. I'm quite happy with it. Carrie Crowley I regard as being very, very good. That's her name isn't it the one that's on Sunday mornings.
- P Yeah Carrie Crowley yeah. Are the main presenters on RTE different now to what they were like back years ago? I'm talking about say you were listening today compared to suppose Gay Byrne and all those guys going back, is there a different style or approach now do you think or do you think it's much the same, even in terms of the news, is it all the same the way it sounds. Less formality or.....
- B Yeah there seems to be less formality today. It seems to be a much more relaxed presentation rather than what we'd call it a stilted presentation. I think years ago they worked to a model and you stayed working within the framework of the model. Now they seem to speak as they see and you know it can change from time to time. I think that it's much more pleasant today.

- P Okay now did you hear that new show that's on instead of Marion Finnuane, Ryan Tuberty.
- B Did I hear it on radio? I haven't but then you see my time for listening to radio is the mornings (laugh) and I will if I'm lying in bed on a Saturday morning I quite enjoy the radio being on and Sunday morning. Now if Ryan Tuberty....
- P Lucky you get a lie on.
- B Well okay but my kids are that age that I get a lie on (laugh).
- P How do you imagine that the radio presenters go about picking or choosing the music that they're going to play? Like do you imagine them like going into a record library with CDs and picking that one or whatever. What I'm talking maybe, there's two aspects. One is the RTE type radio station and one is the stations like 98FM or 104 which are solid music stations.
- B Okay how do I think they pick the music. That's a question I never even thought about.
- P Okay so how do you imagine like say Ronan Collins going in or whatever.
- B I'd say the way they do it, they'd have it agreed with an assistant who would have chosen it for them and they'd know what's coming up, that's what I believe happens and they know then, they'd have the list of songs, a, b, c, d, 1, 2, 3, 4 and they know what's coming up next. I don't think that they've an awful lot of input in it. I think they're well aware of what the next song is and they would be told who the artist is in case they get it wrong.
- P Do you think the DJs put on the records themselves?

- B Oh no doubt somebody else puts on the records for them I would have thought and somebody else does the choosing and lets them know.
- P And they just sit in front of the microphone.
- B Yes that's what I believe. I don't think Ronan Collins would be able to pick a good selection of music anyway (laugh).
- P I'll set the record straight for you. They do actually pick the music themselves and they do drive the machinery themselves. So Ronan Collins, I went out and interviewed him when I was doing the first degree and he actually, people send in requests and he goes down the day before whatever and starts to pick out stuff and put it together. They put the CDs and records on themselves, they sit around the console.
- B I never knew that.
- P And 98FM and 104, those other stations the DJs have no hand, act or part in the selection. It's picked by a computer system.
- B So you're telling me that Radio Éireann , they choose them themselves.
- P Yeah like Maxi yeah. They have a title of presenter/producer. Usually what they used to have was separate ones.
- B Well then I will take back what I said about Ronan Collins.
- P You see the thing is most people do perceive that they go into libraries and pick stuff and even in the music stations in Dublin where the reality is, there's a survey, I got an invitation for a survey yesterday to go to 98FM's website and

become a member of the music jury and they have snippets and I click on them, plays a snippet and then I give it a score and they have many people doing this and then that influences then what they're going to play on the air. So they say 'that's more popular, they don't like that one as much' and they do that even in Today FM and it develops a playlist. And then the DJ goes in with a list of records, say it Chris Andrews and they'd have 67123 and a computer screen he'd tap in 67123 and that's ready to play then and then he presses a button to play it.

B Okay that's the DJ.

P The DJ. The music is all on hard disk somewhere and when they get CDs they put them onto hard disk you know. That's just a brief history.

B I didn't know that now.

P You're not meant to know it you see.

B I always felt there was somebody else putting them on and somebody else gave them a list of what was coming on and that was it.

P No in older terms that would have been the case but now the DJs, in 2FM they wouldn't have any picking they'd be more selecting going on behind the scenes. So speaking about the here and now what do you primarily turn on the radio for. In other words, if the radio was going to cease as an entity or medium tomorrow what would you miss most about the radio. What do you turn it on for like?

B I would say general knowledge and snippets of life if nothing else.

P What about the news now? Where would you get the news?

- B News is very important. I could end up listening to the same news four or five times in the day well then I might say 'I've listened to it enough now at this stage' but in the radio I would quite often leave it on and the television I would just switch it off. But the radio, yes the news is very important. News is very important and general banter. And the snippets of life that you hear on it.
- P So if you were driving home and next minute something comes on the radio and you'd stay listening to it in the car before it's finished or over, what kind of radio do you think makes good radio? Is it that kind of stuff you're talking about?
- B Snippets of life but I would say political discussion.
- P So if there is an interview on you'd sort of listen to the end of it.
- B Absolutely. I love getting political slants, different slants and hopefully make up my own mind from what I hear as to who I believe I would be, I would support. I mean that is very good and different slants on different topics.
- P Who do you think are the best presenters and why, if you were to name names.
- B I wouldn't be one that can name names...Well I would say the only one I would pick out right now is my Sunday morning, Carrie Crowley. I think she's very, very good. And she interviews a person for the half hour or an hour. It's a half hour for them and it's a very enjoyable programme because they pick what song they listen to next, which of course obviously has to be rehearsed. She wouldn't have it at her fingertips. I consider her very good. In fact I consider Sunday and Saturday morning very good. But then I suppose that is the time I like best. That's a great Sunday morning listen. Then you have your

tunes indispersed, which to me are well chosen. So Saturday morning now is good but then I suppose I have to be honest with it these are the only times I get a chance to listen to it. I mean Maxi now in the morning I'd like right enough.

P And then I'm going to go on to other stations in the minute but on Saturday where you won't seek out other stations.

B No.

P You're happy enough.

B I'm quite happy. Look Radio 1 is the (inaudible) in the house. You go into the car and somebody else takes over and I'd be driving.

P Do you have preset radio in the car or do you have to tune it.

B No I have preset radio.

P And what's it set to?

B It's FM 104. That's the one that would be on. I've got a CD in the car as well but hopefully the young fella will operate the CD (laugh).

P So you've probably answered all this but what attraction does RTE radio hold over for you than the other non RTE stations.

B Well basically what I've said. Basically the conversations; the snippets of life. I mean that aspect I love that and you get very good political discussion in there if you're lucky enough to drop in and it's good to listen to have different points of view you know.

- P RTE radio is funded by the licence fee and on air commercials and the other stations are financed solely from the on air advertisements. What do you think of this system of financing? Do you think it's fair?
- B Ah well I suppose I'll be perfectly honest about it I never thought it was fair, I would have always thought like that if we are that they're all entitled to equal treatment and depending on, I never like the idea of RTE getting all the money from the licence fees or whatever and I never liked it for TV or radio. I just feel that other people are entitled to their share of it. Now that is my belief in that.
- P So just to tease that out then. Just say other people were getting it would it diminish what RTE was doing, what they could do.
- B Now that I suppose, the honest answer is yes it would diminish the quality of programme that they're putting on because they need the resource to put on the quality of programme, the programme that I kind of enjoy and there's a lot of research going in there which is an awful lot more research goes in there I would have thought than in the other stations. The other stations are only turning over the records so I suppose if you level the playing field the other ones will rise a fraction. RTE will suffer a lot, they'll suffer a fraction that the other ones rise and yes I suppose when you put it that way.
- P Whatever.
- B I suppose leave it cause at least I've got one radio crowd that I like listening to you know.
- P Now you mentioned in the previous thing about sponsored programmes but in terms of RTE radio today the sponsorship in terms that you might hear stuff

sponsored whether the weather forecast sponsored or if you heard shows. What do you think about sponsorship? Does it make any difference to you whether shows are sponsored or not?

B Well it doesn't make any difference to me. In fact I think it's great to see them sponsored. They're getting in a few bob and okay it gives that advertising to the sponsor but yes I think it's good to see sponsorship. I mean it gets more money in there on the hope that the station itself is utilising the money properly but I mean that's for the station to decide.

P Should RTE radio produce their programmes differently in comparison to what the other stations have on the air.

B But they do anyway. That question is a..... They do anyway.

P Perhaps what I mean by that is that they should be going more mainstream to follow what the others are doing.

B Oh no, no, no, stay the way they are. They're doing fine. If they can improve on it even more, then by all means, yes. They're doing fine the way they're going.

P In Dublin what station provides the most competition to RTE Radio 1?

B I don't know.

P Would you hazard a guess?

B 98FM.

P Okay, so what stations are the most popular in Dublin do you think?

- B I suppose 104 and 98, I'd imagine.
- P Well the honest answer is that probably people would perceive say News Talk as providing competition. The most popular radio station in Dublin is RTE Radio 1 with 30% and far down below at 19% and 20% is 104 and 98.
- B Very good.
- P And News Talk only 5%.
- B So I'm not alone in my thinking (laugh).
- P Oh no you're in the majority of people and in the country it wins out, Radio 1 wins out but increasing competition from the local stations in the home territory outside Dublin, it's nearly 50:50. If I was to mention the phrase public service broadcasting what does that mean to you?
- B Public service broadcasting. I think it means it's RTE, it's supported by the taxes or by the licences. I suppose at the end of the day it means nothing to me, public service broadcasting.
- P What's the difference if any between 2FM and Today FM?
- B I don't think there's any difference. Same old rubbish.
- P In your opinion in regard to 2FM in terms of public service broadcasting what do you think about 2FM in terms of that public service broadcasting mandate or ethos?
- B I don't listen and I would assume all the rest of them.....

- P Would you perceive 2FM as being a music station?
- B Yes I would, just music, music, music.
- P Do you ever listen to Today FM?
- B If I listen to it it's because somebody else is in the car and somebody else put it on but I'm RTE.
- P Do you have any opinion on what's broadcasted, even if you don't listen to them, the Dublin stations. What's your opinion, if you were to launch general opinion at the Dublin stations, all them stations that are on out there, what would you say about them. Well you've established that you're a loyal Radio 1 listener so would you think they're what, that they cater for other people and that's the end of it.
- B Yes. I really find that's a very difficult one for me to answer as I don't listen to them.
- P But say for example would you have heard of the radio station News Talk.
- B Yes.
- P And would you ever have been tempted to listen to that.
- B No, no, no. I'm in the RTE Radio 1.
- P No there's a lot of people like that there. They have, the average would be maybe three stations people might have. Then there's a certain core of people

that have one station and that's it whether it's Ireland or England and they just listen to that station and they're happy with what they get.

B Well I'm the one station and that's it.

P Did you ever listen to the BBC stations?

B I suppose when I was younger I listened to the BBC stations, music or the charts.

P Before there was music happening here really.

B Yes. Now, no I don't. Like I say I'm a one station man I suppose and if it's on another station it wasn't I put it on there. I press the button in the morning and it comes on to Maxi and that's it (laugh).

P And do you think that the other non RTE stations should be allocated funding from the license fee if they put on the types of programmes that RTE would put on. Well that's similar to the other question but if they put on the programmes that RTE put on should they be allocated funding from the licence fee.

B Yes they should be I can see a problem with it. We've hit it already. We're dividing up the big sum into a good series of smaller sums and we end up with a major bit of rubbish all over. You end up with so little you only get snippets along. You can't divide the big pool by ten and still give the same quality to the one that's.... I feel yes they should get some but on the other hand I'm losing the quality in the radio in RTE.

P What's going to happen as a matter of information since RTE got the license increased a couple of years ago the government have top sliced the license and

kept some of the money and they've brought in legislation called the Broadcasting Funding Act and the Broadcast Commission of Ireland have that money now and it's now 60 million and that is available, will be, at the moment it's stuck in Europe on competition grounds but what that's for is a public service broadcasting fund to which radio stations and TV stations like TV3 and even RTE themselves can apply to and make an application for programmes that can be done. So I presume the majority would be available for television drama stuff and there will be a fair amount available for radio and one of the things if stuff is going to be on radio it should be on prime time so to make the application much..... At the moment, the system is set up in place and it's just, they got word back from Europe saying they're looking into it because of the Competition Act and those but that's what's on the cards.

B Very good. Then what they should do if the other stations modelled themselves on RTE style.

P Well the thing is the other stations might say well we couldn't pay or afford to do that type of programme or wouldn't do without subsidy so they're being told now well if you want to apply for the form then you put the stuff on mainstream. So maybe it might up the quality of stuff.

B Oh yeah so long as RTE don't suffer.

P What's happening with the radio, RTE was getting a net loss every year because they weren't increasing the license but now they've increased it and they've almost kind of indexed linked so when they gave them that they said 'okay you can have this but you're not getting it all because we're going to keep some of this.' So they're now funded and they have this pot then.

B To give to the other stations.

- P Like I don't think it's a huge amount off the top of the license.
- B Well that's fair enough. So RTE won't suffer. Radio 1 won't suffer.
- P How do you find out about programmes on the RTE schedule, radio schedule?
- B I just turn it on and see what's on.
- P And are you familiar with what's going to be on when you want it.
- B Well for me it's easy (laugh). Like Saturday morning is always the same, Sunday morning is always the same at 7 a.m.
- P We know when we want to rob you (laugh). What do you think radio is going to sound like in ten years time? What things will they have on or do you think it will be different?
- B I hope it won't be different. They're fine as they are. If it's not broken don't fix it. It's fine. Keep it, it's light in the morning, it's nice on Saturday and Sunday mornings, it's perfect.
- P The problem with that is and that why (inaudible) carried out you see is that they'd all love it to be like that but what happens the customer or the new listener coming in. The mainstream of 40-50 years and another age younger so then everybody moves up you see right and then you move up and you want everything to remain the same and then RTE are in a dilemma if they don't recruit new listeners, they won't grow with us and then this is the point of all this thing. What happens, they're trying to keep the lads loyal, and they're trying to create something for new crowds coming on and then definitions like middle age. If you said middle age years ago you'd have said a fella in his 40s was middle age. If you mention it to students now they'd say

oh 30s would it be and if you said to the average 60 year old probably into Dire Straits and they're Beatles. When I think of my fathers generation. So all even lifestyles. All this kind of stuff influences and they go how do we sort it out. But that's what I'm saying.

B That's the purpose of the survey I see.

P Well it's part of it.

B To a point.

P It's part of what is the key issue for.....

B But those are always going to be there.

P Oh yeah.

B And you won't ever change that. You're going to get my strand, you're going to get the next strand.

P The actual title of this project is RTE Radio Key Audience Issues for Public Service Broadcasting.

B So this is for the people that will be getting a slice of the top slice is that right.

P The research. Oh no it's not for that. It was funded by RTE the research to carry out. They gave me a scholarship to do it and they said go ahead and do it and it was just that within the overall picture of 30% say in Dublin listening which is far ahead in that, if you look down beneath all those figures there's a lot of shifting sounds and the people that are coming up that were raised on a diet. I've found out that people listening to radio at home is a huge influence

on what they're going to do later. It's almost like how you raise your kids. So if people are listening to say pop music stations at home when they came to thirty, I was talking to one or two of them here, they've no truck at all with RTE. They go 'oh I don't listen to RTE, I get what I want from whatever'. So that's increasingly happen.

B So my idea to listening to Carrie Crowley and the snippets of life is from listening to the sponsored programmes and the Dear Frankie.

P It's a heritage. It's a brand, the RTE brand you trust it. You feel secure with it and then other people don't want the speech, just want the songs or whatever. But then there's a period of time when people are growing older as they get a mortgage or children and they go 'this information is now suddenly important'. I must listen to the news, bin bag prices have gone up or whatever and before that whether they just big social life. So all these, then what happens every new station that comes on and I'll talk about them in a minute they cannibalise the existing audience. They don't actually create a new audience, so they rob it from somewhere else and somebody is robbing it from wherever. Do you listen to music on anything portable like an iPod or MP3 player or walkman?

B No. Sometimes not often I'll listen on the mobile. If I happen to have the earplugs on me then I'd listen to it. But mainly I'd listen to it coming it in.

P You're actually out of the posy because the mobile phone is going to take all radio future, digital radio. The mobile phone is going to be the apparatus.

B Good company.

- P In terms of choice do you think there's any radio station missing from the airwaves in terms of like what's on? If you had a radio station doing this it would be very popular.
- B No you see I don't think radio stations should do one thing and one thing only. I think they have to have a little bit of a mix and that's why I've a thing about turning over to pop music all the time. You can't have.....
- P There's no distinguishing between the programmes and DJs.
- B Exactly, you got to have, we'll say they're on for the half hour or hour and then somebody else takes over with a different style. I think that's very important.
- P A key is that BBC has one hour and Radio 2 have a lot of music on but within that and you see the thing is it's the working (inaudible). If they feel that the day isn't moving on, say you were listening to 98 or 104 the DJ changes but you wouldn't know his name.
- B I never looked at it that way but yes (laugh).
- P But say you were doing a job say a manual job say you were sort of plastering the walls and you had the radio on and you go now it's time for the Ronan Collins show and you go oh he's on now and I'd better be finished over there by five and you set a kind of body rhythm by listening to the radio but the music stations that are on with generic music you don't get a sense that there's an actual show on. It's a music, the DJ is setting up the songs and no sooner is he on, and he's on four hours maybe, then another lads on and then there's very little to distinguish them. That's the problem for them guy you see. That's there problem.

B Okay.

P Anyway RTE Radio 1 puts on a summer schedule whereby some of the prominent presenters go on holidays for several weeks and included in this would be Gerry Ryan on 2FM. So you have Joe Duffy, Pat Kenny, a few of the morning presenters going off for summer holidays at the same time. What do you think of that and what do you think the reason is for that?

B Well I would say the reason for the summer period thing is that people don't listen to the radio quite as much and they're not catching the listenership. If it's fair outside you won't be sitting inside and most people listen to the radio, plugged in radio rather than having the.... most people do, there is no point saying otherwise, they do, most people listen to the radio at home and if you are outside well then you won't have the radio with you. I find it kills it for anybody listening. I would find the summer time is not good for radio.

The general jest would still be the same. Somebody else comes in and steps in for Maxi in the morning but sure I've no bother with that because Maxi in the morning is light-weight but it's nice to have your breakfast just after getting up. You're not ready for anything heavy there, you know. And in fact your man on the sports in the morning.....

P Des Cahill.

B Des Cahill, he's very good. Great old style.

P There's a bit of a spark between him and Maxi.

B Yeah but he's got great style. He's got a lovely easy way.

P So what do you dislike most about radio in general?

B That's hard to make an answer to that. What do I dislike most about radio in general? I can't answer that because I mean I don't dislike radio you see and I can't think of anything. What I would dislike as you've already mentioned it the big long programmes that go over the same old stuff for two or three hours. That does not work. You have to have the breaks and the style, the breaks and the contents, the breaks and the quality of the stuff you get. There is a time when you want to listen to a bit of music, there is a time when you want to hear a bit of chat, there is a time when you need the news and the news at times comes on a little bit too often but that's why, but I can see why it would come on because different people listening in at different times. But if you happen to be listening for a morning you could be listening to the same news after the three or four hours you've heard the same news at least I would say three or four times. For a continuous listener it's repeated the same all the time.

P So I was going to ask you what station do you think is the most entertaining, so that's probably Radio 1.

B Oh it's Radio 1.

P The most informative.

B Radio 1.

P And the most professional.

B Radio 1.

P So what types of programmes would you like to hear more on RTE radio. Like 'I'd love to hear more of that type of programme'.

- B I would like to hear more of I suppose the Carrie Crowley type. As a matter in fact I enjoy the Carrie Crowley types. The Sunday Mesilina type of programme is a lovely snippet of life, little stories of life. That's a lovely little one. And that's the kind of programme. More of that.
- P Okay.
- B More of that style. I mean the Sunday Mesilina/Carrie Crowley style, not necessarily the full half hour or whatever but kind of style programme I think would do well.
- P What do you think of Dublin stations compared to stations down the country. Where do you go down the country?
- B Down the country I go to Limerick and.....
- P Live 95FM or
- B Radio Limnea.
- P What's that one?
- B Radio Limnea, it gives a little bit of local news. To be perfectly honest about it any time when I'm down there at the weekends I don't see an awful lot of local news but apparently what it would do is it lets local people know what's happening in the area or if there's any funerals or whatever going on. That kind of news. What was the question?
- P What do you think of the Dublin stations when you compare them with other stations? Like you wouldn't hear like death notices on the Dublin stations but then.....

- B And I'm quite happy not hearing death notices on the Dublin stations (laugh).
- P Mind this is the thing for a city station like say metropolitan area is that they're kind of local but they're not too local whatever.
- B That's right.
- P And then when look and say.....
- B Down in Kilfennan (laugh).
- P There's a tremendous sense of who you are, you need to know what's going on and how're you sided.

Appendix G: Interview with ‘Susan’

Interview with Susan (Lecturer) real name ‘Vb’

PH. What was your earliest memory of listening to the radio?

Vb. Earliest? The earliest memory was probably in my grandmother’s house, playing with her old radio. You once the UK with dials is with Hilversum, Helsinki, and all these sort of things. Is I don't remember too much of the content of it, I would have been quite small. Just the BBC voices and the music. The classics -which I used to pirouette to. So that would be the earliest memories. That would be me yet may be, 3 4 or 5 years. And then after that, we actually got my grandmother he new radio and we also got one. And again, it will be listening to our parents programmes. You know, they were actually be listening to the news for that sort of thing. Or jazzy sort of things.

PH. And what about when you were a teenager what did you listen to?

Vb. My father worked in advertising. He got to launch's what is now 2 FM., “Cominatcha!” Radio 2. I remember the catch line. I remember listening to that. I also remember as a teenager, the pirate stations. They started coming in. Radio Dublin - and they always sounded as if they were in the bottom of a bin. I was playing the radio underneath the covers. Radio Luxembourg was another and then 2 FM which obviously would have been a bit later. Listening to 2FM which was Radio 2 and sending-off of those competitions and the dreadful Larry Gogan’s voice.... They would have been my memories. I remember that used to be the big thing at school that if you liked a guy you would get a request played for him. And he turned out to be my husband. Curiously enough! We actually went out with each other when we were 16. Then there was a big gap and we got back together again. Met again!

PH. Can you name some of the famous songs from the radio back then? Songs that you associate with radio back then.

Vb. Radio and Killed the Radio Star. It wasn't really my favourite, but is really stuck in my head. It comes back. I'm remember that song so well because I was doing my Intermediate Certificate. And for some reason they were playing that song outside and I can remember it. Other songs? I suppose it would have been things like Thin Lizzy. When really thinking now, the 1970s. What else?

PH. Now have I was to ask you to make up a compilation CD with some of your favourite tracks. Your ten oldies-what comes back to you?

Vb. It would probably be the Eighties music. It would probably be from when I was in college and there would be more sort of things like; U2, The New Order. And I remember listening to Burt Bacharach and getting one of his albums. On my own bat. It's my parents had no interest in him. I just heard a couple of his instrumentals and they were brilliant. I think you got one in the market. Is there would have been a bit down Franks mansion. A bit 0 Louis Armstrong. Ella Fitzgerald. And yea. Burt Bacharach, which is weird. My brother stole that album and I've never been able to get it back.

PH. What was your first record?

Vb. My first record was a group called Wild Cheery? Play That Funky Music. I think that's what it was called? Followed by I remember going out with a guy who liked Showaddywaddy. And he loved that. So it would have been a lot of that Seventies music. Maybe some compilations, Bryan Ferry, what a guy with Uptown Girl? Oh Yea...Billy Joel. That sort of thing.

PH do you think that what you used to listen has or had any bearing or influence on what you listen to now in terms of the radio?

Vb. Might do. I didn't think it did. Like my mother always used to listen to Gay Byrne. And I can remember, that if I was sick from school, it was always Gay Byrne who was on the radio. And I can remember when I was working abroad for many years, I remember coming back and my friend who I was in college with was playing Gay Byrne on Radio 1 all the time. And I thought, oh my God! And now I find I do listen to Radio 1 a bit more. On the way in here, it was or RTE radio 1 and News Talk 106. So I'm flipping between them.

PH. What you have preset in your car on the radio?

Vb. And preset? I have RTE 1, 2 FM, one of four FM, and news talk 106 and I have what else-spin 103. And lyric FM. And not today FM. I used to listen to today FM but then they interviewed me for something and no one just don't do it so much any more (laughs).

PH. Do you hear songs on the radio to take you back to a particular spot a location or time?

Vb. Oh yes. Oh yeah. I remember I was living abroad for a while and was going out with an American actually, it was only when I was in my twenties. And we kept in contact or whenever and I remember that song called *Captain of My Heart* [Double] and I knew that the relationship was going nowhere. I remember because my mother was sick. And I started going out with another guy but I remember that song Captain of My Heart by ...(prompted by PH ..Double) yes! Any anytime I hear it now it reminds me of that time.

PH. What about a classic summer song?

Vb. That one remember, the 46 A one? And driving in here and I am heard and I remember it. (Prompted) yes, it was Bagatelle. That reminds me of the summer.

There's loads of songs that would remind you ,for example, dances that we went to. That sounds very old-fashioned but. Discos!

PH. What your opinion of the music than RTE Radio 1 plays? Ronin Collins, or John Creedan, or Maxi?

In Vb. It would be morning time for for example, when travelling. So that the John Creedan. Or the Tubridy Show, he seems to go for more funky music.

PH. What about the Tubridy Show, what you think about it?

Vb. I watched him on the TV and he was extremely annoying. And I do find him at bit stiff. But funnily enough, I don't mind the radio show it seems to have grown on a bit. Is like it takes on certain areas for example, nappies, people's sex lives, and it always sounds a bit distasteful. But that's got a charm of its own. Is so, I don't mind the Tubridy show. I find him easier to listen to them Pat Kenny.

PH. In terms of DJs on the radio, generally. The find that there is a difference between what they do now what they used to be doing?

Vb. I don't know, I think maybe it's because I'm getting older, I never seemed to know the name of anything any more. And wondering is that the DJ? Because sometimes I really like the music and nobody announced at the beginning and it's definitely not announced at the end. And I go "is there anything or is that just me?" And I think, maybe they did say it? That tends to be on 2FM, or 104, or Spin FM. They probably do it more on 2 FM. But I don't like the music that the play of 2 FM.

PH. What's your take on the female presenter's?

Vb. Yes, I thought about that before. Woman presenters on the kind of talk shows can be OK. But woman DJs just don't do it and I don't know why they don't. But I

remember thinking that they have tried for funky DJs before in the past and it sounds like it's just too much of an effort. Maybe it's just something to do with the voice any need the deeper voice. The John needed to be rush, rush, rush. And yet FM 104, Joan, I think this. She is part of a threesome in the morning.. She seems fairly confident and comes across OK but woman DJs generally, no. This is but sometimes in say, talk shows, the likes of Clair McKeown they can get away with it.

PH. Only imagine that presenters are DJs choose a take the music that the play on the radio?

Vb.. Maybe depends on? I don't know? I never really thought about that. I presume that some of it is by request and maybe some of it is gone for example, going into a room where there are some "classics" and some music that just goes down well. Kind of across the decades.

PH what's your mental picture about how the presenters are DJs operate?

Vb. I have this vision of machines that plays CDs and that they have a number of them that they just slot in, pressing buttons and the just sitting there with this kind of panel in front of them. And they just sit back and listen to what's playing. So that would be my vision of them.

PH. If the radio was gone tomorrow as an entity or medium what would you miss most about it?

Vb. I'll turn on for the news, for information. Or for commentary or whatever. Especially the morning shows. The talk shows.

PH. What makes for compelling radio 4 good radio in your opinion? If for example you where listing in your car, what would make you stay to listen to this the end of something?

Vb. Let's suppose...now it would be areas that would be of interest to me that pertain to my life or whatever. Or they can be about general areas. For example, I was just listening to a piece just now about the Rutland Centre. And it was reasonably well presented. And earlier on they were talking about hair removal so I hung on until that was finished. So would you she depends on the subject matter.

PH. Who are the best presenters in your opinion?

VB. I suppose Gay Byrne, although he could be very effeminate at times. Just his manner in terms of the way he went on. But I suppose it was reasonably good because he kept your interest. Gerry Ryan can be quite good as well. Again, sometimes over the top. But he can keep your interest and he would always throw in the odd comment that you would do yourself. Marion, I know she could kind of have views on things. Quite definite in views and that would put me off, but maybe that is good thing. In that, she's getting a reaction out of me. And her voice -once been a speech and language therapist - is just so bad that needs to be treated. It all goes back to voice. Oh Yea, Sean Moncrief, I find him good. I remember watching him years ago on a programme called The End, which is a bit like radio with the face on it. Because he was just talking talking talking talking on it. But he's just verbal diarrhoea, he just keeps coming. I find Dunphy more difficult to listen to. I can actually listen to George Hook and I find him OK. I find that and flicking more around the stations needing to escape to listen to some music which usually I play too loud and then maybe wanting to see what's happening here. It depends, I might have a bad day in work and then just get into the car and listen to music.

PH. When the the chance to listen to radio? Vb

Vb. I do not the morning I started listen to the 7 to 9 show on RTE radio 1.

Morning Ireland. And then I'm listen to be Tubridy Show. But I will do that one of getting staff ready. But when the three kids come downstairs, I have to turn of

otherwise there is just too much noise in the house. And I can't talk over it. Other times, I am trying to listen to it and I say "sheesh" I am trying to listen to it. A friend of mine just leaves it turned on quite low and her kids just learn to live with that, but I dunno about that. I don't think that's quite fair. So really, I suppose I'm just a car listener. There was some resellers and I can across that said that there was too much noise going on and that kids weren't blaring to listen. To be able to differentiate their words. That's a love of kids have language delays now because they are not learning what we call discrimination of sounds. There is too much noise and then the kids can get overloaded. But I noticed that my husband leaves on lyric FM on in the background and I can be quite soothing. And even my eldest someone who is 11 goes to his room and turns on lyric FM.

PH. What attraction, if any, does RTE radio hold for you, as against the other non RTE Radio stations?

Vb.. There is still a bit of loyalty there I suppose. Like we were saying earlier, what you used to listen to years ago. I have reverted back listening to RTE radio 1 at the start and end of the day, it still there. You would definitely miss it if it wasn't there. Though, having NewsTalk, has helped a bit. But maybe maybe it's just format that you have ingrained on you from when you listened as a child? There is that morning radio and there is evening driving home radio.

PH. RTE Radio is funded by the licence fee and on air commercials and the other stations are funded by on air commercials. What do you think of the system, do you think it's fair?

Vb. I don't know. The whole licence fee paying I find kind of annoying. But I don't know is that just sort of ingrained? You do get the feeling of a monopoly and that they are allowed to have this licence fee and advertising. I mean the BBC have their licence fee and then there's no advertising. So, why do RTE have both? But I

suppose it really affects me in any major way in my lifestyle. Other things do more so. It's just hope they don't keep hiking up too much.

PH. What do you think of having sponsored programmes on RTE radio, does that make any difference to? Vb stretched out

Vb. Not really. I'm always conscious that the weather is sponsored. That never really notice whether there is major sponsorship. So, it probably goes over the head a bit.

PH. In Dublin, what station do you think provides the most competition to RTE radio 1?

Vb. I suppose from my point of view-and really doesn't do it for the news-he is news talk.. The really needs to be a mixture of one of four and 106. I generally don't listen to the 98 FMs so for me I would listen to FM 1 4 with that just doesn't really do it for news. So I don't know really if there is a direct competitor for RTE radio 1. For other people, I suppose, it might be something like 98 FM.

PH. If I was to mention the phrase Public Service Broadcasting? What does the phrase mean to you?

Vb. That they are government-sponsored, state sponsored, which all this reminds me of Sesame Street. Financed broadcasting. Where in terms of the news and there is always a certain slant taking. In terms of interviews, there are always certain toes that are not trodden on. In terms of choice of subject, there would always be a certain element of control. It's kind of understood, it's kind of complicit, I don't know quite how it works..... What other stations like news talk would be much freer to say things. I remember when I was on strike with the Health Service and RTE reported with a bias whereas 98 FM got the story more correct. But the way it was reported on

RTE Radio was that there was this crowd kicking up down there 'what's wrong down there?' I've always felt that it was biased.

PH. What would you say is a difference, if any, between 2 FM and FM?

Vb. I don't really listen to 2 FM. So don't really listen to it except to avoid the Angelus.

PH. That incident where you were on strike which you referred to earlier, has that left a scar on you in terms of the accuracy of the news that you hear?

Vb. It did. It's not that I was terribly surprised as, but it did confirm. So that when you to hear things in the news you kind of say "

Appendix H: Grounded Theory ‘memoing’ example

	<p>In meetings and discussions with say with producers in radio about the concept of public service broadcasting or when they join RTE is it taken as a given that they would, you know, know the (inaudible)?</p>	
		<p>Well it’s not like a book of gospel that we, you know, get regularly and formally read extracts from..... It’s not like that. There are issues which come up pretty much all the time, different issues which focus the question of what public broadcasting is, what are the values, whether our practice in a given programme or</p>
	382	<p>Well it’s not like a book of gospel that we, you know, get regularly and formally</p>

	<p>Objectivity is a bit removed by the way say for example the way Eddie Hobbs presented the programme.</p>	
	<p><u>Achieving</u> balance over a period of time</p>	<p>Well some people would argue that certainly. It's a legitimate discussion and then you would have to say okay but you know it's very frequently the practice of cabinet ministers to say that they'll appear in a programme but they won't be debating with anyone. They'll do an interview with an interviewer but they won't mix it with a range of other voices so when you put that into the mix then you say well, you know, maybe this concept of being fair</p>
	<p><u>Achieving</u> balance over a period of time</p>	<p>Well some people would argue that certainly. It's a legitimate discussion and</p>

	<p>So there is no question of the concept evolves over time and that's one instance where you're talking.</p>	
	<p>Concept <u>evolving</u> over time.</p> <p>Context in which it functions <u>is constantly changing</u></p>	<p>Oh I think the concept does evolve over time because the world in which the concept has to function and the needs of audiences and the kind of service that people require is constantly changing so the notion of public service</p>
	<p>Concept <u>evolving</u> over time.</p>	<p>Oh I think the concept does evolve over time because the world in which</p>

	<p>With regard to listenership which in term in terms of public broadcasting what is most important? Is there any difference between the 'Share' and 'Reach' in terms of RTE radio?</p>	
	<p>Share is the more important figure because you're <u>looking</u> at how people have apportioned the total time they've spent listening.</p>	<p>Well there is a difference. In terms of the loyalty of audiences to particular stations reaches the, sorry share is the more important figure because you're looking at how people have apportioned the total time that they've spent listening or watching in a day to various services but reach is also important because you're then talking about a measure of how aware people are of the existence of a service</p>
	<p>Share is the more important figure because</p>	<p>Well there is a difference. In terms of the loyalty of audiences to particular</p>

	Do you worry about say the loss of reach?	
		<p>Yes, you worry about loss of share and you try and try to do something about it (laugh) because worrying isn't at the end of the day much use to anybody and of course it's a concern because more and more, for example in radio more and more services are being licensed all the time and there is a certain mathematical inevitability, that's a phrase I've used before about this, the more services there are to attract people's attention then the more your share will go down in the immediate</p>
	386	Yes, you worry about loss of

	So which came first then, the decision to build a weekend audience or the day time, mid morning audience?	
	<u>Schedule</u> building over a period of a couple of years.	They actually have to be conducted in tandem. You've got to decide, you've to look all those issues. You've got to try and make sense of them, you've got to say here's a gross opportunity, here are audiences that we're not currently serving at the weekend, we can bring something to them, in order to bring the best thing
	<u>Schedule</u> building over a period of a couple of years.	They actually have to be conducted in tandem. You've

	<p>Perceived pressures to remain popular while not replicating the other – non-RTE – stations.</p> <p><u>Seeing PSB as a spectrum of extremes.</u></p> <p><u>Public representatives seeking minority interests</u></p>	<p>It's actually a simple, well I mean I wouldn't underestimate but it's a pretty straight forward fix.</p> <p>Now if as a public broadcaster you do that you veer from one set of risks to another. What I mean by that is this. If we loose audience share there will come a point when you will face the public or the public representatives who will say you're getting all this licence fee every year and nobody is listening to you. What are you at? If on the other hand you veer to the opposite extreme and you simplify schedules and offer a formatted recipe to people and you maximise</p>
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	<p>I mean because your dual function in terms that you take advertising and the license fee, I mean do you think there's a conflict between public service broadcasting being commercial and say take the license fee. For example would you prefer to get total license fee money like the BBC and not have to deal with the commercial activity?</p>	
	<p>Not realistic to seek to be totally publicly funded.</p>	<p>I think not actually on balance. It would be easy say 'yes' you'd prefer to have it totally publicly funded but that's actually not a reality in this country and I wouldn't spend any time really day dreaming which is what</p>
	<p>Not realistic to seek to be totally publicly funded.</p>	<p>I think not actually on balance. It would be easy say 'yes' you'd prefer to</p>

	Q And it's very transparent in the reports.	
	New financial reality	Well it is now. It wasn't in the past but it certainly is now.

Appendix I: Irish radio listenership May 2012 (Source JNLR/Ipsos MRBI)

All Adults Aged 15+
Table 1: Average Weekday Yesterday Listenership

	NATIONAL		CO. DUBLIN		CO. CORK		SOUTH EAST		SOUTH WEST		NORTH WEST		NORTH EAST & MID		MULTI-CITY		DUBLIN COMMUTER	
	Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)		Weekdays (change from Jan-Dec'11)	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Listened at all *	85	(+0)	83	(-2)	85	(+0)	84	(-1)	87	(+0)	90	(+1)	82	(+1)	85	(+0)	84	(-1)
Any National	47	(+0)	47	(-1)	49	(+4)	45	(-1)	45	(+1)	47	(+1)	46	(+0)	48	(-1)	48	(-1)
Any RTE Radio	35	(+0)	36	(-2)	36	(+3)	33	(-1)	32	(+1)	36	(+2)	34	(+0)	37	(+0)	37	(-1)
Any RTE Radio 1/ RTE 2FM /RTE Lyric FM	35	(+1)	36	(-2)	36	(+3)	33	(-1)	32	(+1)	33	(+1)	34	(+0)	36	(+0)	37	(-1)
RTE Radio 1	25	(+0)	30	(-1)	28	(+2)	22	(-2)	20	(+0)	22	(+1)	22	(+0)	28	(+0)	30	(-1)
RTE 2FM	11	(+0)	8	(+0)	10	(+1)	12	(+0)	13	(+1)	12	(+0)	15	(+0)	10	(+0)	9	(-1)
RTE Lyric FM	4	(+0)	6	(+0)	5	(+0)	3	(+0)	1	(-1)	3	(+1)	2	(+0)	5	(+0)	5	(+0)
Today FM	14	(+1)	9	(+0)	16	(+1)	16	(+0)	15	(+0)	16	(+1)	15	(+1)	13	(+0)	10	(+0)
Newstalk	8	(-1)	13	(+0)	10	(+1)	6	(-1)	6	(+0)	7	(+1)	6	(-1)	11	(+0)	12	(-1)
Any Regional/Local/M-City/D-C#	59	(+1)	51	(-1)	64	(+0)	62	(+2)	65	(+1)	71	(+1)	53	(+1)	56	(+0)	51	(+0)
Classic Hits 4FM			2	(+0)	7	(+0)									3	(+0)	2	(+0)
Radio Nova			5	(+0)													5	(+0)
Beat 102-103							22	(+2)										
Spin South West									20	(+2)								
i102-104											20	(+0)						
i105-107													10	(+1)				
98FM			13	(+1)														
FM104			21	(+0)														
Q102			11	(-1)														
Sunshine 106.8			4	(+1)														
Spin 1038			15	(+0)														
Phantom 105.2			2	(+0)														
Corks 96FM/C103					48	(-1)												
Corks 96FM					35	(-1)												
C103 (Corks 103FM)					17	(+0)												
Corks Red FM					19	(+0)												

* Indicates the proportion tuning to the station at some time on the day.

Any regional/local/M-City/D-C includes any audience to Beat 102-103, Spin Sth West, i102-104, i105-107, Classic Hits 4FM & Radio Nova.

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All Adults Aged 15+
Table 9: Average Weekday Yesterday Listenership & Share Of Listening (7am-7pm)
For Local Stations

Station Area	Yesterday Listenership		Market Share (7-7)	
	Weekdays		Weekdays	
	(change from Jul '10-Jun '11)		(change from Oct '10-Sep '11)	
	%	%	%	%
Kildare	26	(+3)	21.8	(+4)
Kilkenny/Carlow	40	(+1)	37.0	(+9)
Louth/Meath	26	(+1)	36.1	(+3)
Laois/Offaly/Westmeath	38	(-1)	33.2	(-1.6)
Wexford	39	(+2)	32.2	(+1.1)
Wicklow	27	(+5)	24.4	(+3.2)
Limerick	45	(-2)	34.2	(-2)
Tipperary	48	(+4)	57.0	(+4.6)
Waterford	45	(-2)	46.9	(-1.7)
Clare	47	(+0)	45.6	(-2.6)
Kerry	52	(+2)	51.4	(-1.7)
Galway	41	(+3)	25.8	(+1)
Mayo	61	(-2)	51.1	(-2.2)
Roscommon/Longford/ Sth Leitrim/ Cavan/ Monaghan	47	(+1)	47.0	(-1.3)
Roscommon/Longford/Sth Leitrim	55	(+1)	49.6	(-3.7)
Cavan/Monaghan	39	(+1)	43.6	(+1.7)
Donegal Nth	66	(-1)	62.1	(-0.7)
Donegal South/Sligo/Nth Leitrim	48	(-2)	33.7	(+0.9)

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The Report provides information on all individual stations over a range of demographics and special interest categories. The full report can be purchased from Ipsos MRBI. Tel. 01-438 9000.

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